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ADULTERY ANALYZED;

AN

INQUIRY

INTO THE

CAUSES OF THE PREVALENCE OF THAT VICE

IN

THESE KINGDOMS,

AT

THE PRESENT DAY.

*DEDICATED TO A MARRIED COUPLE OF FASHION-
ABLE NOTORIETY.*

BY

PHILIPPUS PHILARETES, A. C. C.

Thou shalt not commit Adultery.—Exod. xx. 14.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. J. STOCKDALE, 41, PALL-MALL.

1810.

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DEDICATORY EPISTLE

TO

— OF FASHIONABLE NOTORIETY.

I HAVE taken the liberty to dedicate this little work to you, because, however undedicated such a truth may be, you both stand in need of advice on the subject which it treats of.

After a courtship, conducted, strictly, on fashionable principles, so that neither knew, nor sought to know, the disposition of the other, you were united in the bonds of matrimony—bonds indeed they have proved!

In the ceremony which completed your then, mutually, indifferent connection, you both, I cannot say, solemnly, perjured yourselves, by taking an oath, which you knew to be false,

and swore to a mutual observance of contracts, which you were, firmly, resolved never to fulfil.

The horror of perjuring yourselves at the altar of the Almighty's peculiar house, was dispensed with, for the higher gratification of your vanity, in going through the tedious ceremony, by a special license.

You, have, both, long enjoyed the forbidden fruit of Adultery—have, both, sometimes, experienced the pangs of jealousy, without tasting the delights of connubial love—have, both, ever been tormented by the fears of the discovery and publication of your infamy in maintaining shameless adulterous connections. I do not mean to insinuate that you felt disposed to repent of the crime, but that you shrunk from the inconveniences and privations of which the disclosure might be productive.

To you, then, who possess the proud distinction of being children, and of not having honoured your parents—of being married, and of

not having performed one duty of a husband and wife—of, alas! having, children, and having brought them up in the way they should not go—OF HAVING SUBJECTED YOURSELVES TO THE PUNISHMENT, by the law termed infamous, OF THE PILLORY, FOR WILFUL AND CORRUPT PERJURY (ON THE OCCASION OF YOUR MARRIAGE) of the most heinous cast—of having, in short, done all those things which you ought not to have done—and of having left undone all those things which you ought to have done; without, once, having had the honesty to make such a confession—the following pages are addressed, without permission, without respect, and almost without the hope of serving you, on the commencement of a new year, by

P. P.

New Year's Day, 1810.



P R E F A C E.

A PREFACE to a book has now become so established a custom, that the public expect it as a thing of course, and if their wishes in this respect be not gratified, many readers will throw it aside in disgust. Whether this be candid and fair it is not the Author's business to inquire; it is sufficient that, being acquainted with this general, and, perhaps, natural expectation, he should prepare himself to gratify it.

The motives which induced the Author to write on the subject of the following pages, were such as he hopes will meet the approbation of his readers; at least, of such of them as have the true interests of virtue and morality sincerely at heart.

Some few years ago, when the vice, which is the subject of the following investigation; had risen to a very alarming height, and, in consequence, the interference of Parliament was thought necessary, by strict laws, to endeavour to arrest its progress; the public attention being, at that time, excited towards this object, he thought that a publication on this express subject would be likely to be perused by the world with attention, and, he hoped, with good effect. He, therefore, put together his thoughts on this important topic, and sent the MS. to a London bookseller, who mislaid it, and by whom, at this hour, it has not been returned. From part of the rough copy which remained with him, he wrote the work, and considerably altered it; and as he does not find that any writer has treated the subject with that regularity and system necessary to give it effect, he has been induced to enlarge and finish it in the intervals of his other literary oc-

cupations. That the subject is, even in the present state, treated in the best manner that it is susceptible of, is very far from the Author's opinion ; but the idea, once started, may perhaps, hereafter, be improved, by some future writers, better qualified to investigate it with the attention and method which it deserves.

Some little sketch of the contents, may serve to give the reader a general idea of the entertainment he may expect to meet with in it ; and, on that account, perhaps, may not be unacceptable to him.

It is divided into chapters, and is intended to take a comprehensive view of the subject ; its causes ; and the most likely means of checking its increase.

Chapter I. is styled the introductory chapter, being intended to develope the subject which will be discussed in the

subsequent pages of the work. It notices the opinions of some great men on the prevailing immorality of the times ; holds up to view the immorality and bad example of the higher classes of the community ; and calls upon individuals, in every rank of life, to use their utmost endeavours to stem the torrent of those licentious manners, which have, unhappily, gained a footing in society.

Chapter II. gives the Scriptural account of the first introduction of sin into the world ; and shews how prone the nature of man has been to the commission of sin, ever since the unhappy fall of the first parents of the human race ; and that all the aids, which reason and religion hold forth, should be exerted to counteract the baneful influence of this deterioration of our nature.

Chapter III. notices the natural and

acquired evil habits of man ; and the great importance of the proper management of children in the earliest period of their lives.

Chapter IV. sets forth, as another predisposing cause to this crime, the evils resulting from the modern boarding schools for young ladies ; and remarks on the advantages and disadvantages of public and private education.

Chapter V. considers the influence of the customs and manners of the present day on the female character, and shews in a striking light, the effects of dissipation, in weakening every good principle, in the female mind, and preparing it for seduction.

Chapter VI. embraces the new philosophy, and the bad effect which it has on the female mind, in breaking down the dis-

inction between right and wrong; and accustoming the mind to immorality and vice.

Chapter VII. considers the mischievous inferences to be drawn from the two popular dramas of PIZARRO and THE STRANGER, and endeavours to guard the reader against their seducing power.

Chapter VIII. takes a review of the principles and tendency of the writings of Mrs. Wolstoncroft Godwin; and of the life of that female, by her husband, Mr. Godwin.

Chapter IX. investigates the modern mode of courtship; and shews the tendency which it has to make the parties, who are engaged in it, deceive each other; it also, particularly, considers the manner in which this important affair is usually conducted in the great world.

Chapter X. enters at large into the nature of the marriage union ; considers the comparative criminality of the violation of the marriage contract by the male or female ; and adverts to the difference of the ceremonies in different countries.

Chapter XI. reviews the modern conduct of the married life ; the errors into which people are apt to run respecting it ; and the best mode of avoiding them.

Chapter XII. enters pretty fully into the subjects of adultery and divorce ; and proves the weakness of every excuse that can be urged in palliation of them.

Chapter XIII. considers the different modes of punishing unfaithfulness to the marriage vow ; and points out the most likely method of lessening this pernicious vice.

Chapter XIV. recapitulates the subject of the preceding part of the work ; and from the whole, draws a few inferences calculated to serve the interests of religion and virtue ; and to promote the design of the present publication.

Such are the heads of the important points which will be treated of in the following pages ; and, from their perusal, it is hoped the reader will find some hints which may be useful to him in forming his opinion of the causes of that dereliction of the moral principle which, so strikingly, marks the features of the present times. To perceive in a clear and distinct manner the real grounds of any prevailing corruption, will be allowed, it is presumed, a good step towards avoiding or correcting it : for when we are sensible of the quarters whence the danger proceeds, it must be our own fault, if we do not guard them with all possible care.

Should any portion of amusement be combined with the advantage which, it is hoped, may be derived from the perusal of these pages, it will be very gratifying to the Author ; but his highest ambition, and the point to which all his wishes tend, is, that Vice may hereby be made to hide her detested head in deserved obscurity, and that Virtue and Honour may be exalted to their due rank in the world.



ADULTERY ANALYZED,

&c. &c.

CHAP. I.

Introductory Chapter.

THE imbecility and frailty of woman has been a constant theme of exulting declamation amongst the weak and vicious, in all ages ; whilst it has, as uniformly, been the source of pity and regret to the generous and noble minded christian. There is, however, little reason to be surprized at this conduct in those who, by every base art of seduction, have studied to overthrow the fences of female honour, and to destroy the precious jewel of innocence : since we may naturally expect that they would not only, ungenerously, triumph in the base and immoral act ; but likewise endeavour to throw an odium upon the whole sex. To find some pallia-

tion for a line of conduct which reflects such disgrace upon human nature, is what every good natured person would wish, if it were possible, to do ; but this is a case of so very aggravated a description, that the greatest stretch of charity is unable to find even the shadow of an excuse for it ; and those profligate characters who practise it, deserve to be shunned and despised by every moral and religious person, and, indeed, to be treated with the most contemptuous indignation.

With regard to the common assertion, that the woman generally meets the partner of her dishonour half way, were it true in the fullest sense of the idea, it could never detract a single atom from the criminality of the action on the part of the man. For if one person should venture to break down the mounds of morality, how am I thereby justified in a dereliction of the path of honour ? On the contrary, it is certain, that because of a relaxation of morals and the prevalence of vice, a greater circumspection is necessary in our own conduct, that we may not add the weight of bad example to the too prepon-

derating scale. It is, incontrovertibly, our duty, if divine and civil laws have given us a rule whereby to regulate our conduct, and which may both promote the benefit of society and the good of the individual, we are obliged to act agreeably to that rule, let the conduct of others be what it may. It appears, therefore, that this argument of the adulterer, which is the most specious of any that can be produced, instead of being in his favour, may be turned with considerable force against him.

There is one consideration respecting the prevailing vice of these times, which is the subject of the following inquiry, that, in every unbiassed mind, must greatly aggravate its atrocity: and this is, the *deliberation* and *perseverance*, which are commonly necessary to its completion. The man, who, in the moment of hurry and surprize commits a crime, and afterwards, sincerely repents of it, is entitled to much candour and indulgence; but he who, deliberately, prostitutes his abilities to the perpetration of the basest and most ungenerous purposes, as is the case of the adulterer, de-

serves the utmost expression of our undisguised horror.

This sentiment of just indignation will prevail, more or less, according as religion and a proper sense of decorum, have a greater or less influence on the human mind. Would to God that the perverted fashion of the times would allow these just sentiments to operate; and then the discountenance which would be shewn to this vice, would diminish its power and effectually lessen its influence. The man of real honour and true religion, will scarcely think, that barren wishes to effect the abolition of this disgusting vice, will be all that is required of him; but will conceive himself called upon by every motive of humanity—by every sentiment of generosity—by every principle of esteem and veneration for the virtuous part of the female sex, to endeavour to shield them from the unprincipled attacks of artful and vicious men, and to provide them with arms, which, if properly used, may enable them to repel all their attempts. Such is the motive, which induces the author to take up his pen: and on the investigation of

this interesting subject, he will endeavour to shew virtue in all her native charms and beauty, and vice in her natural ugliness. May all the powers which are friendly to female innocence and virtue, lend their aid to the attempt ; and grant that these humble efforts may not be used in vain ; but that the writer, may have the felicity of beholding confidence and affection, now almost banished from the married world, once more return, and he will think that the exertions he has made in this cause, have not been altogether unavailing.

The *passions* and *various affections*, which agitate the human breast, were doubtless implanted in it, by the Author of our existence, for the best and wisest purposes. When placed under the controul of reason and religion, as they ought always to be, they are excellently calculated to convey us to the port of happiness : but, when they are set at liberty from these just restraints, they will soon throw our feeble bark on the quicksands of misery, and finally wreck us on the rocks of destruction.

Of all the passions, that which, by a strong and irresistible impulse, attracts the

sexes towards each other, seems to be the most deeply engraven in the nature of man, for the plain and evident design of continuing the race of men, to supply the successive removals from this fleeting scene, to a more perfect and more enduring condition in the Heavens above. It may be added, that this universal passion requires, above all others, to be restrained within the bounds of moderation, and to be directed by the precepts of religion ; since the disregard of this circumstance, every day, presents to our view, instances of the most complete misery in the world. If this all-powerful passion had been implanted in man's nature, and he had been prohibited from indulging it, by an absolute decree of the Creator, there might then, indeed, have been some plausible cause to complain of the dispensations of heaven, and to lament that a natural appetite should have been bestowed, and the permission to indulge it, refused to man : but the great Creator is not only all-bountiful, but likewise all-good to his creatures, and therefore, under certain restrictions, and regulations, has, not only, permitted, but even

commanded them "to increase and multiply and replenish the earth." Thus every ground of complaint against the Creator is removed ; and the restrictions, which he has wisely placed on this passion, are intended to promote the happiness of the individual, and the peace of society ; for which reason it is the duty of every one to abide by them.

But, although we are all of us convinced of the necessity of the duty, thus, imposed on us, and may easily satisfy ourselves of the propriety of the reason on which it is founded, yet, according as men are actuated by amiable or by unworthy, propensities, they will attend to or reject it.

In that breast where honour, generosity, and piety, reside, this passion wears the garb of an amiable angel of light. The affection, which in such a case, it inspires, is constant, sincere and ardent ; our solace in the darkest hours of adversity, and the heightener of our joys in a prosperous state. It is the lamp which conducts our steps, in safety, through the intricate and rugged paths of life ; and which will guide us to the realms of eternal bliss, where vir-

tue, truth and genuine love, for ever dwell together. This passion qualifies and sweetens the bitter draught of life—refines the affections—improves the heart—and is, finally, the parent of every thing that is praiseworthy, either in the sight of God or man. On the other hand, in that bosom where reign the furious and headstrong passions, and where virtue and honour have no habitation, this impulse discovers itself, by all those black and detestable actions which characterize the source whence it springs ; rendering, not only, the unhappy object whom it possesses, completely miserable, but, also, extending its wide-spreading reign to all around. Under the semblance of true and genuine affection, it deceives and allures to destruction. First, it insinuates itself into the heart of unsuspecting innocence—then it betrays the confidence which has listened to its blandishments—and lastly, it abandons its wretched victim to irremediable woe.

The chivalrous age, when every knight took a solemn oath, that he would defend the chastity of virgin or matron, at the expense of his blood, or life if it so befel, is

indeed, as a celebrated author justly observes, long since past by and gone; and as it, frequently, happens, that the customs of the world run from one extreme to another, we are almost led to the conclusion, that the recreant knights of the present day have sworn to ruin the peace and to destroy the honour of all virgins and matrons, by every way and means they can contrive. It has been well observed that, in the times and age just alluded to, the passion of love appeared with all the enthusiasm of honour; for love and honour were then unalienable. The men were sincere, magnanimous, and noble; the women patterns of chastity, dignity, and affection. They were to be won, only by real heroes, and this title was acquired by protecting, not by betraying, the sex. Happy times of love and innocence, have ye taken a long, a final leave of this sublunary world? Will genuine, sincere, and undissembled love, will ardent, constant, unabated affection, no more condescend to visit this luckless earth; but must we, for ever, be doomed to behold the sad, the afflicting, reverse of

the picture? Forbid it honour, and forbid it love!

The wonderful increase within the last few years of what is, modishly, called gallantry, but what the voice of impartial truth loudly proclaims to be unprincipled libertinism, is such as, very seriously, to alarm all the true friends of virtue, and the well-wishers of order and decency throughout the world. And it is a consideration very far from diminishing this alarm, that a great proportion of those persons who, by their very exalted rank, their wealth, and the great weight of their examples, have it in their power to stem the torrent of this prevailing corruption, should be so far from discountenancing it, in the manner their duty should point out, that they have rather promoted it, by their example, and upheld it, by their arguments; so that they have contributed, in a remarkable degree, to the diffusion of this pernicious vice. Those who have not considered this subject, with that degree of seriousness which it deserves, can, scarcely, form an idea to what extent the examples of the higher classes of the com-

munity influence those who are placed below them ; but those who have reflected, properly, on this important point, have, with much truth and eloquence, placed the matter in its just light.

The higher ranks of society are to be considered as the fountain, whence the living manners of the times derive their origin : if, therefore, the fountain should happen to be corrupt, the smaller streams, which proceed from it, must, of necessity, be tainted with the contagion. A vicious nobleman, says an excellent moral writer, (Dr. Knox) or a profligate man of fashion, contributes more to extirpate morality, and to diminish the little happiness allotted to mankind, than all the malignant disquisitions of the sceptics. So very powerful did this sensible writer, justly, consider a bad example, which the world is, always, more ready to copy than a good one. How can any individual of this most important class, seriously, reflect on this truth, and not endeavour to be exemplary in all his ways ? The author of the sensible little tract, intitled, “ *Thoughts on the Manners of the Great,*” remarks, with great

judgment, that vain will be all endeavours, after partial and subordinate amendment, Reformation must begin with the great, or it will never be effectual. Their example is the fountain whence the vulgar draw their habits, actions, and character.

Prevailing, however, as the corruption of manners confessedly is, yet must we not give way to despondency, or suffer despair to look in upon us. The sacred writings inform us, that divine mercy would have stayed the proceedings of unerring justice, and would have delayed the destruction of the most corrupt city of the old world, if TEN righteous and just persons had been found therein: let us hope that in this kingdom we have many times ten truly pious and exemplary characters, the incense of whose good works will ascend to the throne of grace, and will call down blessings on our "sea-girt isle." Whoever, attentively, studies the history of God's peculiar people, the Jews, cannot avoid remarking that, whenever a good king ruled over them, they were happy: what reason, therefore, have we to hope for the peculiar blessings of hea-

ven upon these dominions, seeing that we have a sovereign to rule over us, who is exemplary in every public, as well as private duty, of that exalted station in which he has been placed by Providence! The study and uniform wish of his long administration, has been to advance the true worship and honour of God in all its purity, and by wise and salutary laws to render his subjects both good and happy: himself a pattern of lively and unaffected piety, worthy to be copied by all his subjects! “Long may the crown flourish on the head of God’s anointed, and may the work of his God prosper in his hand. And when he shall change this earthly kingdom for an inheritance that fadeth not away, may his sceptre remain with his children, and with his children’s children from generation to generation!” On the bench, we have some truly amiable and pious prelates, and amongst them, “some of the first in dignity are the first in conduct.” At the bar, learning, abilities, and correct conduct are, eminently, conspicuous. In the senate, the greatest abilities shine forth, together with a zeal

for the public service which, at no period, has been exceeded. It should be impressed on our minds, that it is entirely owing to the vigilance and well-timed exertions of our government, that the abominable principles which have caused such misery in a neighbouring kingdom, have not been productive of the same effect in this island: that we are indebted to this vigilance for our actual existence as a nation—that our religion, our liberty, and our laws, have not been subverted: and finally, that we are not at this moment a province of France, and subject to all the tyranny and oppression which LIBERTY, falsely so called, EQUALITY, and, the imaginary RIGHTS OF MAN, have brought upon their deluded votaries. With respect to the practice of that pernicious vice, which is the subject of the following pages, let us hope that we are not, wholly, lost to every sense of virtue and decorum, and become utterly irreclaimable in a national point of view; but rather let us hope that, though the distinctions of right and wrong, of virtue and of vice, may, at present, be somewhat obscured, yet that they are

by no means effaced from our minds. Let us, confidently, hope that when the manly virtues which are known to inhabit the breasts of Britons, and that true generosity and nobleness of thinking, which, in a peculiar manner, distinguishes our conduct in all parts of the world, shall again resume their empire in our hearts, we shall speedily wipe away the dishonour which this national delirium reflects on us, by the future correctness and purity of our conduct. And since it is certain, that the aggregate sum of the virtue or vice of a nation depends on the conduct which actuates the different individuals that compose the community at large, let us be extremely attentive, neither by our opinion nor example, in any wise, to countenance the prevailing immorality ; but, by every means in our power, let us endeavour to recover the tone of public manners and to reinstate virtue and good morals in the hearts of Britons. In order to promote this desirable object, let us ascend to the first remote causes of this vice : then consider the many concurring

circumstances which tend to increase its influence: and, lastly, endeavour to find out the most probable means of checking that alarming progress which it has made among the different ranks of society in the present times.

CHAP. II.

How sin first obtained a footing in the world.

BEFORE the glorious light of the gospel arose to illumine the steps of mankind, no question ever embarrassed the thinking part of the community so much, as that amazing degree of moral turpitude which, so generally, prevailed, in every age of the world, and by what means it first obtained a footing among the sons of men. The Pagans of the Old World, and the most enlightened philosophers which ever existed, have invented many theories to account for this degeneracy, and have racked their inventions to find out plausible reasons for it; but it was altogether impossible, from the very nature of the question, that they could ever arrive at any thing like certainty in it. For, on the supposition of their having, in the course of their speculations, stumbled upon the truth, yet, with respect to them, it could only have

been bare conjecture, and, the direct contrary, for aught they knew, might, in all probability, be the truth. This degree of uncertainty did not, however, solely attach to this particular question, but also, with regard to others which were even of greater importance, viz. the condition of the human soul after death: and, if it survived the body, as was conjectured, what line of conduct ought to be pursued in order to insure for it a happy condition hereafter. Many of their reasonings on these important topics of inquiry, are interesting in a high degree, and, for men who had nothing but the dim light of nature to direct them, extraordinary; still, for the reason above stated, they could never arrive at any absolute knowledge in their speculations; wherefore, when the plausible hypothesis of one philosopher had ran its course of celebrity, it gave way to the theory of another. Thus the Pagan world vibrated between the discordant plans which their different teachers set on foot, and, were always unable to attain any positive ground for their systems.

But if, from the prospect of their dif-

ferent systems of philosophy, all of which were erroneous in a greater or less degree, we consider the state of religion and morals which obtained among them, we have just reason to regret that miserable state of mental darkness which ever enveloped them, and to lift up our hearts, in grateful songs of praise, to the glorious King of Heaven for that full and perfect light of the sun of righteousness which we, who live in the present age of the world, so fully enjoy. The gross idolatry and superstition in which the Pagan world was involved, introduced so great a delusion and imbecility of mind, that the very light of nature itself was eclipsed, and abominable and unnatural crimes excited no indignation in their breasts. The multiplicity of gods in the heathen world; and the wicked and impure rites by which they were worshipped, were productive of so great a corruption of manners amongst them; that nothing but the infinite goodness and power of the Almighty could extricate them from it. In this state of degradation, to which the Pagan world was reduced, in the early ages after the Deluge; the power

of the Creator was exerted in a manner sufficient to produce the effect intended. From the midst of an idolatrous generation, his own house and family being infected with the general corruption, the pious ABRAHAM was *called*. In him the Almighty found a faithful heart, and a frame of mind exactly calculated for the great service he had to perform. He was, himself, therefore, instructed in the true worship of God, by immediate communication with the Great Creator, and, in his family, was preserved, that pure system of religion which, in after ages of the world, was made more clearly manifest to mankind, when our blessed Redeemer came down from heaven to instruct, in the fullest manner, the sons of men. From Abraham, by lineal descent, came Moses, the Jewish lawgiver, who was commanded to commit to writing that true and genuine history of the creation of the world—the conduct of its early inhabitants—the general deluge—the behaviour of the post-diluvians—and the history of the Jewish nation to the time of his death. These truly interesting particulars are all contained in the

first books of Moses, and cannot be too deeply impressed on the mind of every Christian. The points which we will notice, at present, as tending to illustrate the design of this work, are those which inform us by what means Sin, and the misery which is the constant companion of it, first obtained a footing in the world.

The sacred historian sets out with informing us, that God created this world, which we inhabit, in six days. He tells us that the Divine Architect, having surveyed the work which he had thus completed, pronounced every thing to be "exceeding good." How, indeed, could it be otherwise: for Almighty power and Almighty wisdom, united together, must, of necessity, produce a perfect work! Man, we are told, was created "in the image of God," an expression which, undoubtedly, signifies that the frame and constitution of his soul was, at his creation, made pure and spotless, free from every stain and pollution of Sin, and, in this respect, like unto the powerful Creator who called it into existence. That no other interpretation can be put upon this expression, ap-

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first books of Moses, and cannot be too deeply impressed on the mind of every Christian. The points which we will notice, at present, as tending to illustrate the design of this work, are those which inform us by what means Sin, and the misery which is the constant companion of it, first obtained a footing in the world.

The sacred historian sets out with informing us, that God created this world, which we inhabit, in six days. He tells us that the Divine Architect, having surveyed the work which he had thus completed, pronounced every thing to be "exceeding good." How, indeed, could it be otherwise: for Almighty power and Almighty wisdom, united together, must, of necessity, produce a perfect work! Man, we are told, was created "in the image of God," an expression which, undoubtedly, signifies that the frame and constitution of his soul was, at his creation, made pure and spotless, free from every stain and pollution of Sin, and, in this respect, like unto the powerful Creator who called it into existence. That no other interpretation can be put upon this expression, ap-

pears from the consideration of the Almighty being "a Spirit," according to Saint Paul; and "without body, parts, or passions," according to the first article of the church of England. Man was, therefore, created pure and perfect when he first came from the hands of the Creator, but he, unhappily, fell from this pure and perfect state, by disobeying the express command of his Maker. By DISOBEDIENCE, *Sin* was introduced into the world, and *Misery*, of various kinds, the Sovereign Lord of the Universe hath inflicted on those who, in defiance of his commands, venture to commit it. *Sin*, therefore, and *Misery*, are closely linked together; and as long as men dare to commit the one, they will not be able, in one shape or another, to escape the latter.

For the purpose of vindicating the justice of the Creator in this dispensation, which infidels and scoffers have frequently arraigned, it is to be considered, that in order to make man an object of reward or of punishment, it was, indispensably, necessary that he should be constituted a

free-agent. It is evident that those things which are impelled, by necessity, to act in a particular manner, can neither receive merit nor reward for doing well, nor punishment for doing ill. As they are compelled, by the constitution of their nature, to act in such a particular manner, there is no alternative in their conduct, consequently, no merit, or the contrary, in any of their actions. Thus, we observe, the *instinct* which is placed in the various animals below man, compels them to observe a certain rule of conduct from which they never deviate; their action, agreeably to this impulse, depends not upon themselves, but upon the will of their Maker, who gave them no option of acting in opposition to it; therefore, it is neither deserving reward nor punishment. Man, however, who is placed far above the brute and irrational part of the creation, acts upon a much nobler principle. To him is granted the high and distinguishing privilege of *reason*, which enables him to discern the difference between right and wrong; and the freedom of acting is also given him,

as the gospel sets before us: whence we may infer the power which we have to withstand them.

It is a strong argument of the goodness and impartiality of the Creator, that he hath not sent us into the field of battle, without providing us with suitable arms for the conflict. If the power of temptation should be strong, or the artifice with which it is laid before us should be great, as is very frequently the case, the helps which are extended to us, are, proportionably, great. If we will but use the powers which are granted us, to the utmost:—if we will not depend upon ourselves or upon our own abilities, to encounter our subtle adversary without the divine assistance:—and if we will, faithfully and constantly, ask assistance at the hand of God, he will, effectually, extend it to us. Watchfulness over our own conduct;—prayer to Almighty God for his powerful aid; and endeavours with all diligence, to guard the avenues of our hearts; will be the best means of protecting us from the power of temptation. Sorrows for any sin which we may have committed; and pious resolu-

tions to act better for the time to come; will be the most likely means of keeping us from being totally subdued by sin; and of preserving our souls from enthrallment by its powerful seducements; as well as of preserving them in that healthful state, which may insure to us, with the merits of our Redeemer's sufferings, the blessing of eternal life.

But then we must ever carry in our recollection, that very great and continual watchfulness is necessary to prevent us from becoming victims to the artful, and frequently, imperceptible, approaches of our spiritual adversary. The enemy of our peace, assumes the semblance of an amiable angel of light, whenever it may, more effectually, promote the unhallowed purposes he has in view; and we should well recollect, that we have not always the advantage of an adviser, at hand, to unmask to us the features of the foul fiend of darkness, and thus to put us on our guard against him. The true image of sin is so deformed and disgusting, that if we could but behold it in its native ugliness, it would carry a sufficient antidote in

itself. The poet has, therefore, well observed,

“Vice is a monster of such frightful mien

“As to be hated needs but to be seen!”

For this reason it is, that she seldom shews the whole of her disgusting form to any but those who are completely in her power, and with respect to whom, therefore, it is no longer necessary to keep any terms. To the generality of mankind, she introduces herself by slow and very gradual approaches: repeatedly offers herself to them in forms so fascinating, and so well adapted to the corrupt state of man's nature, that she is, by degrees, tolerated, and at last received into the inmost recesses of the heart. All this is very well and very concisely expressed by the same poet in these words:

“But seen too oft, familiar with her face,

“We first endure,—then pity,—then embrace.”

This insidious conduct of Sin, is very remarkably conspicuous with regard to the peculiar temptation which is the subject of the following work. If the full dimensions of that horrible wickedness, which it is the design of the *systematic seducer* to cause the

object of his licentious wishes to commit, were named, or even hinted at, when he first opens his system of attack, it would preclude all hope, or even the possibility of success ; unless we suppose the mind of the person, on whom the attempt were made, already sunk in the depth of vicious indulgence, and so controuled by headstrong and ungoverned passions, as to determine to gratify them at all events. In the latter case, the mode of storming the citadel would probably be most successful ; but in nineteen cases out of twenty, the more likely mode would be to sap and undermine the foundations of virtue ; and thus make the surrender more certain, though the process might be more slow. The late importation of French principles, both moral and religious—the introduction of German plays and novels—the mode in which the rising generation of British females is educated—the manners and customs—the dissipation and luxury—the flattery and dissimulation—and “ the form and pressure of the present times,” all contribute to this purpose, and are intended, in the course of the following work, to be

commented on and exposed. It is not, most assuredly, one or two circumstances which could produce that wonderful change, which we all of us see and deplore, in the tone of *British manners*; but it is a combination of them all, which work together and produce this awful effect. It is the business of him, who takes upon himself the office of censor of the public morals, faithfully and cautiously, to disclose all the concurring causes of this public corruption—to trace, with the pencil of candour and impartiality, effects to their true causes—and, either to make the outragers of public decency ashamed of their conduct, or to leave them without any shadow of excuse if they pertinaciously determine to continue in their sin. Few individuals, it is presumed, will seriously deny the utility, or, indeed, the necessity of this attempt; and the present writer has undertaken it because no other person, better qualified than himself, has executed the design with that degree of nicety and detail which the subject seems to demand. Of the goodness of his intention, the Author believes every

true lover of virtue and happiness amongst men will allow him the full merit; he seeks not for literary fame—disclaims the expectation of great pecuniary emolument—and aims to increase the goodness, in order thereby to advance the happiness, of mankind in general, and of the married world in particular, by his humble lucubrations. For these reasons, he flatters himself with the hope, that the amiable and the good, in every class of society, will wish well to his labours, and as to the counter efforts of the vicious, they will be treated with merited contempt.

CHAP. III.

Natural and acquired evil habits, the great importance of the management of children in the early period of their lives.

It is the opinion, of a celebrated medical writer, (the late Dr. Buchan) which seems to be founded in nature, and to be confirmed by observation and experience, that "one great source of the unhealthiness of children is that of their parents." It may be worth while to inquire, whether, the above observation concerning bodily diseases, does not hold good in a considerable degree, with respect to the affections of the mind. Perhaps, it may not be very far removed from truth and probability, if an idea should be started, that one great cause of the lamentable mental disease, which is investigated in the following sheets, is the vicious stem from which children are derived.

We may certainly ask with great propriety, what reason can be assigned, why,

a vicious disposition should not be inherited from vicious progenitors, as well as a diseased body from diseased parents? This opinion has been maintained by many eminent writers, and no solid or sufficient reasons have, yet, been produced to controvert it. It is true, we sometimes see worthy and virtuous parents whose children, notwithstanding all their care, will occasionally turn out profligate, and "bring their grey hairs with sorrow to the grave." This, however, is by no means to be expected, in the ordinary course of events; but must be rather considered as an extraordinary deviation from nature, than the common rule and measure of it. We may, therefore, in general, conclude, that, as well in the human species as in the brute creation, as is justly observed by Horace,

"Fortes creantur fortibus et bonis;

"Est in juvenis, est in equis

"Patrius vigor; nec imbellem

"Progenerant aquilæ columbam."

Brave and good parents will produce a progeny good like themselves: for we behold, in cattle and horses, the spirit of their

sires, and never expect the soaring eagle to generate the peaceful dove.

We may, therefore, consider parents, whose disposition, and whose manners, their children are likely to inherit, together with their bodily perfections or imperfections, as the first grand source of the dreadful corruption so apparent in the world. For this reason, in every well-disposed mind, it is a consideration which should be paramount to all others, that, in the selection of a partner for life, the object should possess amiable and virtuous dispositions; on which depends not only all the happiness or misery which the married state is capable of conferring upon the parties themselves, who enter into it, but, likewise, the posterity which may be derived from that union; since, by their inheritance of virtuous or vicious dispositions, they may, to the most remote period of time, prove the glory, the blessing, the ornaments of mankind; or the disgrace, the outcast, the pest of society.

To strengthen the above argument, if, indeed, it require any elaborate reasoning to strengthen it, we may advert to the de-

generacy and corruption derived upon our nature, by the unhappy transgression of our first parents, who, by disobeying the first command of their maker, opened the door for sin and death to enter into the world, together with their numerous train of diseases, misery, and wretchedness, which have ever since afflicted the sons of men. The scriptures, and that inbred propensity to evil which we constantly feel within our breasts, affectingly convince us of the injury which we have sustained by the fall of the first man. Experience also, incontestibly proves that, in many instances, we have a strong tendency to particular vices or frailties which we, as evidently, derive from our immediate parents, as we do the general corruption of our nature from the first parents of the human race. This bias, frequently, shews itself, in a very remarkable manner, in different circumstances, and at various periods of the human course ; and is called, by a sagacious observer of the human race, “ the ruling passion :” and it has a very great influence on most of the actions of our lives. We may, therefore, with strict propriety,

call those general evil propensities which we derive from our first parents, and those particular ills which we inherit from our immediate parents, by the name of natural, whilst those which gain an influence over us, by any other means, we may denominate acquired evil habits. To the considerations of these latter causes of corruption, we will now proceed to direct our thoughts.

The first powerful cause of these acquired evil habits, which we shall notice, is the base and unnatural practice of consigning the fruit of the womb so soon as it behold the light, to the expected care, but, in reality, perhaps, to the neglect and cruelty of an hireling nurse, whose mercenary fondling and purchased nourishment, are destined to supply the place of that natural sustenance, of the true parent, prepared by Providence. When, therefore, this cruel and unnatural conduct is adopted, how can any one be aware of the fatal diseases which may, in all likelihood, be lurking, unseen, in the constitution of the foster parent? And not only are diseases of various kinds, and frequently of the

most malignant and horrible, sucked into the habit of the infant with the milk, but the bad dispositions and evil propensities of the nurse, are, also, frequently, imbibed, by the very same means: such as the low ways of thinking—the mean and grovelling passions—and all the base inclinations of the lower classes of mankind, from which description of society these persons are but too commonly selected.

“ Besides diseases and unnumbered ills,
“ That latent spread, and flow in milky rills,
“ The noxious food conveys a greater curse,
“ Even the meaner passions of the nurse.”

Of such mighty consequence is this fatal error, that it can scarce ever be, entirely, corrected by the greatest care and circumspection of the parents, in the future education of their child. For when the seeds of evil passions and base propensities are, by such means, introduced at this very early period of life, it may be truly said, “ they grow with our growth and strengthen with our strength,” and we can never be tolerably sure of wholly eradicating them. They may be controuled, they may be restrained, perhaps, and kept within the

bounds of moderation for a considerable time, but we have always just reason to suspect that, at one period or other, they will break out again, and may, perhaps, be productive of the most fatal consequences. Like the cat in the fable which, at the prayer of its master, was turned into a beautiful damsel, whom he espoused ; the moment that she heard the mice running about the chamber, she sprang from the arms of her lover after them : so the low and vile passions thus introduced into the mind, however, for a length of time they may be checked by education, or restrained by a sense of decorum, will, nevertheless, at some unguarded moment, shew themselves, in all their most odious and disgusting forms. Nature will prevail ; she will assert her prerogative ; she will vindicate her rights ; and when, at last, set free from restraint, as a bow which has been violently bent and is again relaxed, she will fly back with greater force, for the violence which has been imposed upon her.

Such are the consequences of this unnatural and cruel conduct in parents. What mother, possessed of a proper

sense or feeling, would dare to brave the dangers! But we may go even a step further, and assert that a "mother who abandons her offspring as soon as it is born," annihilates, in a moral point of view, every obligation, which the child can be supposed to have, to those who were the instruments, in the hands of Providence, of bringing it into existence. The conduct of such parents demonstrates, in the clearest light, that it was nothing more than a selfish principle of individual pleasure, which induced them to give existence to a being like themselves. For this alone, what possible claim can they set up to gratitude from their children. Their offspring, undoubtedly, on this account, owe them nothing : but if, afterwards, by their care and attention, they endeavour to make their existence honourable to themselves and useful to their fellow-creatures, and conduct them, by the paths of virtue and honour, to the road of everlasting life, it is then that their children, voluntarily, give them their utmost reverence, gratitude, and affection.

It may be laid down as a maxim which cannot be controverted, that whenever a

mother, let her rank in life be what it will, with safety to herself and child, nurse it herself; and it ought to be impressed upon the minds of all, that “almost every mother would be in a condition to give such, did mankind live agreeably to nature;” no consideration under heaven should induce them to forego this natural, pleasing, and tender duty; which rivets the affection of the parent to its offspring, and that of the child to its mother.

Let us suppose then, for the sake of argument, that the mother, in compliance with the dictates of nature and affection, nurse her infant with that genial current which is commonly produced in healthy subjects, in great abundance: that she watch over it with unceasing tenderness—think no pleasure so great, no transport so extatic as that of beholding the first fair dawn of reason, and continue to extend her tender duties to her child, till the completion of its seventh year. All this is doubtless pleasing in the highest degree; and amply repays, by the delightful sensations which it produces, all the anxious care and tenderness of the mother. The

first danger, therefore, arising from the employment of hireling nurses, is, in this case, happily, avoided; yet, there are many others which constantly hover over the early years of our lives, and which, without the watchful care and tenderness of a parent, will choak up and destroy the seeds of virtue and goodness, which ought to be sowed in their earliest life, if we would wish them to produce, hereafter, a fair and ample increase of fruit.

It has been asserted, by many writers, that the infant mind is like a blank piece of paper, upon which we may impress almost any characters that we please. Let us then reflect, seriously, upon the vast importance of the early impressions which we stamp on it; which then take so deep an hold as never afterwards to be, entirely, effaced. Let us take particular care what example we, ourselves, set before our children, and what is held out to them by domestics. Let us recollect, that the natural, inbred, evil propensities of human nature are, then, if at any time, to be eradicated, and the contrary principles of virtue, truth,

and honour, introduced into their ductile minds.

There are few things which have a greater influence on the future happiness and well-being of the rising generation, than the management of children in the earliest period of their lives, and until they have completed the seventh year. It is well observed by a late writer, that "all mankind is the pupil of female institution; the daughters until they write woman, and the sons until their first seven years be past." Undoubtedly, it is the province of the mother to inspect the earliest period of our lives; and, consequently, she ought to take particular care to qualify herself for this important duty. But though it, certainly, belongs to her principally, yet, not exclusively, and there are many things to be considered besides the mere exercise of maternal discipline over the tender years of childhood, all of which have a considerable influence upon their future years.

Amongst the many errors, into which mankind is apt to fall, concerning children,

there is scarcely any more dangerous than the opinion of its being of little consequence in what manner parents conduct themselves towards each other in the presence of their children. If they treat each other with disrespect—if jarring or bickering take place between them—if malevolent or cruel reflections are made, or any improper familiarities are seen by a child of five or six years of age; these things are laid up in the storehouse of the memory; and it happens, not unfrequently, that they have a material effect upon the temper of the child; tend to weaken a parent's authority; and operate, almost infallibly, to alienate the affections of their offspring. It is plain, therefore, that parents cannot be too circumspect in their behaviour towards each other, before their children; neither can they be too careful in what manner they conduct themselves to the children themselves.

Long before the period of time, usually supposed, children begin to reflect, to reason, and to draw consequences from comparing one idea with another. The fourth or fifth year has been commonly supposed

to be the earliest period when reason begins to dawn in the infant mind, but, assuredly, we may calculate from a much earlier date; even from the time of the child being able to convey its ideas by means of speech. Instead of the fourth or fifth year we may, therefore, assign the conclusion of the second, or the beginning of the third year, as the period when reason claims to assert its prerogative, and to shew its power in the human mind. From this time parents, who have the future happiness of their children at heart, should be, particularly, guarded and circumspect in their conduct, and in their management of them.

At this early period of life, it is usual for the perverseness of human nature to shew itself, in the most glaring light; and it is, therefore, upon a judicious exertion of the parental authority, or a culpable weakness at this momentous crisis, that, in a great measure, the temper, disposition, and happiness of the child depend; as well as the comfort and future ease of the parents themselves. It is at this period, that the parental authority is to be

for ever established, or for ever lost. A little proper resolution, now, happily, exerted, saves an infinity of future trouble; the opposite conduct is productive of a world of vexation and uneasiness. Obstinacy and perverseness are the noxious weeds of uncultivated nature, and are now never to be eradicated.

If the wayward propensities of a child's temper be now given way to, it will quickly perceive the conquest which it has made; will ever after retain the empire it has acquired; and always will be, in the strictest sense of the word, a spoiled child. It may easily be conceived that such a child, if it live to years of puberty, will make a vicious and profligate character: so that this circumstance alone, may, in a great measure, account for the increase of that vice which is the subject of the following sheets. Too great indulgence of the ill humours of children, gives their passions full scope, and adds a still greater force to their already overweening power. Having no proper check nor controul, they indulge every bad propensity of their nature, and, when married, are still the slaves of their

passions, which at length urge them on to the commission of the foulest crime which a married person can commit. With the utmost attention, therefore, must the faults, above enumerated, be effaced from the infant mind, ere time and indulgence have acquired for them an uncontrollable power.

There is another vice very strongly adherent to human nature; it begins to shew itself very early, and must be checked the moment it makes its appearance. This is the propensity which almost all children have to violate truth. To love truth and to detest falsehood, is the first positive duty to be impressed on the infant mind; and this ought never to be lost sight of during the course of its existence. It is wonderful how soon children will accuse each other of such faults as they have themselves committed, for the purpose of being thereby screened from their parents' anger. They will do this, as soon as they can speak plain; as a little observation may serve to convince us. Rewards for discovering the truth; a remission of punishment; and disgrace and chastisement

for a wilful untruth, at the same time explaining the nature of truth and falsehood to them, is the conduct which should, invariably, be observed towards children in this weighty point; than which, few things are of more importance in the whole circle of education.

Vulgar language and wicked expressions are, also, very early, learnt from servants, and are frequently extremely difficult to eradicate afterwards. It is, therefore, a point of great consequence to engage such servants as are decent in their behaviour; neither illiterate nor vulgar in their conversation: and exemplary in their respective stations; this applies, in particular, to such female servants as are more immediately about the persons of children. By inattention to this object, such mean and destructive habits are, oftentimes, instilled into the tender minds of children, as have the most decided influence on their future conduct, and give such a bias to their inclinations and ways of thinking, as often produces the most serious effects in future.

It may, at the first sight, appear to some persons, that these topics are more adapted to a professed treatise on education, than the declared object of this work ; but if we consider the matter a little more closely, it will be seen, that the management of the early years of infancy has a more decided influence on the future periods of life, than an inattentive observer would suppose. Inasmuch as it is generally allowed, that “ prevention is better than cure ;” it is useful to advance to the fountain-head of the mischief ; and, by exposing the dangers which surround this interesting, yet seldom sufficiently regarded period of the human course, induce the parents and guardians of the rising generation to watch over it with the greater circumspection. This wise conduct, co-operating with the considerations which will, hereafter, be adduced, may, happily, tend to stem the profligacy of public manners, which, by its alarming progress, hath called for the interference of the legislature, and, by ameliorating their tone, add, considerably,

to the prosperity of the state, and to the happiness of individuals and of society at large.

To concentrate, in a single point, the important objects which have been brought forward in this chapter, and thereby to impress them more deeply on the minds of those whom they more immediately concern, it is presumed, will tend to facilitate the benefits which the Author has in view.

The great necessity incumbent on all persons who wish to enter into the state of matrimony, of paying the nicest attention to the morals and disposition of the partner whom they select for life, must be sufficiently apparent to any reflecting person. The duty which rests upon all mothers, who can do it with safety to themselves, of suckling their children, and, thereby, escaping the thousand dangers which attend upon the unnatural custom, so generally prevalent in the higher classes of the community, of consigning them to the arms of an hireling nurse, will be admitted by all who are not the slaves of

prejudice. The duty of combating, and, if possible, of eradicating, the bad propensities of human nature, and of implanting the contrary principles of virtue and goodness in the infant mind: the propriety of parents being very circumspect in their behaviour to each other, before their children, and towards the children themselves; the great importance of having decent and well-disposed servants about the persons of children, and the care requisite to check vulgar or vicious expressions which they may learn from them, are all objects, the propriety of which will be apparent to every candid and unbiassed person.

These objects we would wish the fathers and mothers of families to have constantly in their recollection, and to be assured, that if they really have a regard for their offspring, and sincerely wish them to become useful members of society, and to maintain, with dignity and with honour, the rank which they may be called upon, hereafter, to sustain, they cannot, more effectually, promote these objects,

than by, carefully, attending to these consequential details.

Having now conducted our female pupil to her seventh year, we proceed to consider what dangers she is liable to be exposed to, in the succeeding periods of her life.

CHAP. IV.

Boarding Schools.

THE female pupil of maternal instruction having completed her seventh year, under the immediate eye of an affectionate mother, is generally thought old enough to be transplanted to one of the numerous seminaries of female education, which swarm not only in the metropolis, but in every provincial town, and most of the considerable villages, of this great and opulent kingdom.

A writer of some celebrity on the subject of female education (Mr. Moir), is very severe against boarding - schools ; which, he says, “ like all things in a mercenary world, are, under the semblance of seminaries for education, with a few respectable exceptions, mere shops of traffic, where idleness, insipidity, and extravagance are sold at a stated price : and where imposture is so perfectly reduced to

a system, that the least is, invariably, performed, in proportion as the most is promised." This writer adds—"It is from these nurseries of depravity and disease that the public sucks in most of her pollution; that her vitals are habitually corrupted; her exertions crippled, and her hopes defeated; that the general taste is vitiated by an imperious bias for sensual indulgence; and that many have the misfortune to be placed in situations, the most conspicuous, without proper knowledge of what they owe to God or man."

If the above very severe censure of this writer were strictly true, we have, at once, a key to that deluge of immorality which threatens to overwhelm all ranks of society, and, in no very long time, to chase virtue and decency from the face of the earth. That there is too much reason to complain of these institutions, is the almost unanimous opinion of every impartial person, but we may charitably hope that few of them, in comparison, merit the extreme censure of this writer, whose zeal, in this instance, appears to have ran away with his discretion and candour.

This writer is of opinion, that “parent are best qualified to superintend the education of their children ;” because, being “anxious for their welfare, they regard whatever affects their minds and manners with equal concern ; are naturally shy of their preferences and aversions in every thing they do, and about whatever exercises their tender attentions, or is most apt to win and engross their young hearts.”

There can be no doubt, but that the affection of a parent will induce her to take more care of the education of her child, as far as the parent’s abilities extend, and to enter more heartily into its interests and concerns, than an indifferent person can be supposed to do ; and, for this reason, she might seem to be the fittest person to intrust with the child’s education : but, if we consider the other side of the question, such preponderating reasons will appear, as seem to decide the argument in the negative.

In the first place, it must be observed, that the education of children is an art, which requires very peculiar abilities, and stands in need of very singular qualifica-

tions to enable any one to discharge that most important trust with advantage to the pupil of her instruction. These qualifications are very different from those which this writer has enumerated; and they require singular good sense, to attain to them, even in a tolerable degree. Parents, in general, for this writer seems to have made no exceptions, are evidently not endowed with these requisites; and, therefore, very few of them are competent to educate their offspring in a proper manner. Now the peculiar abilities of every instructor of youth, and the qualifications which she ought to possess, are a thorough and intimate acquaintance with such useful and elegant acquirements, as may fit the pupil to fill and adorn the station in which she is placed by Providence with credit and with honour. Besides these, she should have a thorough knowledge of human nature; a facility of penetrating into the temper and disposition of the pupil; and a sound judgment in accommodating her mode of instruction to that particular temper. To all this must be added, a command of temper on the part of the teacher;

patience, gentleness, and perfect impartiality; together with such a winning softness of manners, as may insensibly instil instruction into the youthful mind, instead of forcing it by harshness and severity.

In the second place, it is almost impossible for a parent, who has several children, to preserve such a strict impartiality, towards them all, as not to let it be perceived that she is fonder of one of them than she is of another: this circumstance, alone, is almost an insurmountable objection to this mode of education. Nor do those parents obviate this objection, or act upon a wise and prudent plan, who, having determined to educate their own children, think it incumbent on them to lay aside the affection of a parent, and to assume all the austerity which belongs to a teacher. By acting thus, affection is quickly superseded by fear, and their children, not unfrequently, dislike and hate them for the remainder of their lives. To steer in the exact line between indulgence, on the one hand, and severity on the other—to preserve the affection due to the parent along with the awe attached to the instructor, is to arrive at a

degree of perfection in the art of teaching, which very few, if any, can, reasonably, hope to attain. Let them hold the scales with however even, however steady an hand, it is almost impossible but that the one or the other of them will sometimes preponderate.

In the third place, where there are several children, they cannot all be, constantly, under the parent's eye, and by an intercourse with servants and dependants in the intervals of absence, the care and the labour of months and years may perhaps be overthrown in a single hour. Parents must, occasionally, visit their neighbours, and in the ordinary occasions of life be, necessarily, absent, very frequently, from their charge, and in these spaces they will unlearn more of what is good, and imbibe more of what is bad, than can, easily, be conceived.

For such reasons the Author feels himself necessitated to dissent from the respectable writer beforementioned, in the opinion, that parents are the most proper persons to superintend the education of their offspring; and he supposes that so

cogent are the reasons, that they will induce the majority of his readers to coincide with him. To himself, however, these reasons are decidedly convincing.

It is not the Author's intention to prefer the mode of public, to that of private education, absolutely, and at all events. On the contrary the best, perhaps, of all modes of education, will be found to be that of a private governess, properly qualified for the arduous task; and placed under the immediate eye of the parent. By this plan, the objections enumerated against parental instruction are completely obviated: the dangers arising from public schools, stated by the same writer, will be done away: and almost every advantage that can be wished for, will be brought together in one point. In the period of relaxation from study, and during the indispensable absence of the mother, her children will not be degraded by the dangerous communication of servants and dependants, but they will have the watchful eye of a prudent governess over them, to prevent their misemployment of their leisure

hours, in the service of idleness, vulgarity, and vice.

But since circumstances will not allow people to adopt the former plan, they will, of course, send their children to a respectable school, when they have completed the seventh year; for a well-conducted school, not one that is fashionable and expensive, may be considered as, of two evils, less than that of educating them at home, where there is not the advantage of a private governess to watch over them in the parent's absence.

From the age of seven to twelve, young ladies might be placed, at well-regulated schools, with considerable advantage; after which period, every year must be considered as too long, since it will, generally, be employed in learning what would be much better not known. This disadvantage must ever attend a too-long continuance at public schools, because there will always be some of the head-scholars that will bias the juniors to that which is evil; and the natural propensity of human nature to that which is wrong, and the great force of precept and example, are well-

known to every reflecting mind. Incentives to headstrong passions, and the force of evil examples to encourage vice, are already too numerous to make it necessary to sow the seeds of wickedness at this early period of life, and which the unwise conduct of keeping children at these seminaries till they are seventeen or eighteen years of age, tends greatly to encourage.

What, we may ask, are the mighty accomplishments which our daughters are likely to learn at the modern expensive and fashionable academies of female institution? In general they are taught to jabber French, in a barbarous manner; to emulate the public dancers at the Italian Opera; to blunder through a lesson or fashionable air on the piano-forte; which, if accompanied by the voice, though out of tune and out of time, they are reckoned prodigies—to be adepts in every costly and whimsical ornament of the person, which expensive folly can dictate, or frivolous fashion invent:—and, in the end, to conclude themselves to be *accomplished women*: these are the glorious fruits of mo-

dern fashionable seminaries of female education!!

What may we naturally expect will be the consequence of this frivolous system of education; and to what points may we venture to conjecture they will lead? Certainly we may look for such consequences as are generally produced, viz. the vain and conceited airs of false refinement and false delicacy—the most unbounded passion for admiration—a taste for extravagance, show, and dissipation—the ruin of a husband's fortune—the loss of their own health—the destruction of their peace of mind—and the wreck of their honour.

Such are the general evil consequences of keeping young ladies too long at the fashionable seminaries of education which so much abound in the present times: and, certainly, it would be far better to keep them at home, with all the inconveniences which attend such a practice, than to put them in the way of encountering such danger as we have enumerated, which, as the same writer well observes. “*violates and corrupts the manners of the public.*”

In some measure, to obviate these fatal

consequences, those who determine to place their daughters at a public school should, carefully, select one that is conducted in an unobjectionable manner ; and should not suffer their daughters to remain, even at such a school too long. After the twelfth year, let the establishment be ever so excellent, or conducted with ever so great propriety, the child should be withdrawn from the dangers and various temptations which will certainly prevail there, and should be placed, wholly, under the eye of the mother. This may be easily accomplished by making them companions to their mother, and if the parents have occasion to visit their friends or relatives, always making them of their party. If the young ladies are likely to have considerable fortunes, private tutors, well and carefully, selected, may, with propriety, complete them in those accomplishments suitable to the rank, they are likely to sustain, in life ; if their fortunes be moderate, the five years they have passed at a good school, added to the future instruction of the mother, will, sufficiently, inform them in whatever is necessary to be

known by a woman who is destined to fill the middle rank of life.

That elegant and well informed writer, Mrs. Hannah More, in her "Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education," has treated this subject in a manner worthy of herself and of the cause which she has undertaken. Those who desire to acquaint themselves with this important subject, should read it, repeatedly, with the utmost attention, until the ideas which it conveys are thoroughly impressed on the mind: and if the instructors of youth will but act up to the spirit of it, a most important improvement will take place in this very momentous affair.

To enter, minutely, into the subject of education, and, critically, to examine every thing that concerns it, does not belong to a work of this nature, it is sufficient, for my present purpose to notice the general result of the mode of educating females which obtains at the present day, and the influence, it is likely to have, in promoting the vice which we have undertaken to investigate. In the course of the inquiry, we have animadverted on the hazard at-

tending the fashionable boarding schools for young ladies ; and the additional strength, given to these dangers, by their remaining too long at them. The question of public and private education has been discussed, and the advantages and disadvantages of each have been impartially considered ; we have ventured to give our own opinion on the subject, of the propriety or impropriety of which the public must decide. The time that a young lady may continue at a public school with advantage, has been, amply, considered, and we have duly noticed the time which is usually allotted by parents to finish the task of female education. In the following chapter it is intended to take a view of the usual consequences of this management, and of the early introduction of females into the whirlpools of fashion and dissipation. The latter circumstance must be allowed very materially to augment the already too great power, which the loose and frivolous manners of the present age have, over the minds and principles of the female world.

If we consider the number of books, on the subject of female education, which

abound in the present day, and the multiplicity of schools, established, as might be reasonably hoped, to put in practice the precepts which are to be found in them, we might expect this art to have arrived at a great degree of perfection, and that the female pupils committed to these academies would take their leave adorned with every accomplishment that can dignify or render lovely the best and fairest part of the creation. This rational anticipation is, however, very far from being realized. Instead of expelling from the female breast pride, affectation, vanity, extravagance, and the too great love of admiration, and implanting, therein, the opposite virtues, the present mode of conducting the education of our females, seems calculated to cherish the former and to destroy the latter. Each of the above assertions might very easily be proved, but to instance only one of them, how shamefully do the modern conductors of female education cherish the inborn pride of human nature, by that adulation which they pay to the children of the rich and great, let their merits or attainments be what they will.

This is in direct opposition to the conduct which ought, invariably, to be observed. As in private, so in public education, the strictest impartiality should be manifested towards the pupils ; and to act otherwise is both unjust and cruel. It is unjust, because no one should be praised or censured for those circumstances of their external condition, which are purely accidental ; which confer no merit upon their possessors ; and which it is neither in their power to prevent or alter. It is cruel, because those who are less fortunate, by birth, very possibly may be, and most commonly are, far more amiable in other respects. It happens, however, in the present case, that a kind of immediate retribution usually balances the account, for those who are thus, without any real desert, raised above their level, are, for the most part, persecuted by the ill-will and ill-offices of their school-fellows ; so that what is gained on one side is lost on the other. Certainly the most wise, as well as the most just way of acting in this important concern, is always to preserve an exact impartiality, and to make *merit* the only criterion whereby to

distinguish one pupil from the other. Wherever this equitable principle is established, we have the greatest reason to be satisfied with the government of the academy ; and where it is not established, the most solid reason to be displeased with it.

CHAP. V.

Influence of the customs and manners of the present day on the female character.

As soon as a young lady has left school, the pernicious custom of the present day, immediately, ushers her into public life, however unprepared she may be to acquit herself with propriety in her new and difficult situation. The career of dissipation and folly, thus early commenced, is so far from receiving any check from the precept or example of the mother, that she rather encourages her daughter to enter into scenes, replete with danger, and surrounded by a thousand dreadful temptations. At an age when their grandmothers were not liberated from the nursery, the dashing females of the present age, are shining at operas, routes, and balls, turning night into day, and thus rendering themselves old in constitution, and haggard in appear-

ance, before they have arrived at their full strength and vigour.

How very deplorable a sight is it to the eye of reflection, to behold the engaging and beautiful form of youth and innocence, nightly, exposed to the impudent stare and wanton remarks of the riotous sons of intemperate and noisy intoxication! How doubly affecting is it to see, in the course of two or three winters, the natural bloom of beauty, exchanged for the meretricious glow of art, and the inexpressibly charming blush of innocence and native modesty, for the bold stare and impudent manners, (to say no worse of them), which so remarkably characterise our modern belles.

On this point that elegant and eloquent writer, Mrs. H. More, thus speaks : "While one cannot help shrinking a little from the idea of a delicate young creature, lovely in person and of engaging manners, sacrificing, nightly, at the public shrine of fashion, at once the votary and the victim; one cannot help figuring to one's self, how much more interesting she would appear in the eyes of a man of feeling and delicacy, did

he behold her in the more endearing situation of domestic life. And who can forbear wishing that the good sense, good taste, and delicacy of the men had rather led them to prefer making companions for life in the almost sacred quiet of a virtuous home. There they might have had the means of seeing and of admiring those amiable beings in the best point of view : there they might have been enabled to form a juster estimate of female worth than is likely to be obtained in scenes where such qualities and talents as might be expected to add to the stock of domestic comfort, must necessarily be kept in the back ground, and where such only can be brought forward as are not particularly calculated to insure the certainty of home delights."—(Strictures, page 168.)

We may here observe, that the censure of our modern men of fashion is the greatest and best recommendation to a man of genuine good sense and true delicacy. "She is a pretty girl, but new to the world; when she has acquired the last polish of fashion, she will be tolerable !" Such is the language of our modern beaux

on the first appearance of a new planet in the hemisphere of fashion, folly, and dissipation. But inasmuch as the beauties of nature do greatly surpass those of art : as innocence and dignity are superior to artifice and cunning : and that newness to the world, which is so much condemned by the fastidious votaries of fashion, is superior to the best polish which high life and fashionable society can give, by so much will the former be preferred, by the sensible part of mankind, and those who look for happiness in the married state, to the latter : and, it may be added, that, in the same proportion, will the former engage the affections, and captivate and retain the heart of a virtuous and sensible man, before the latter. But since we must reason upon things as we find them, and not as we would wish them to be, the evil custom of too early introducing young ladies into public life, may be justly considered as one principal cause of that frivolity and lightness of manners, which is the striking impropriety of the present day, and as paving the way for that formidable vice which is the subject of our inquiry.

A celebrated and admired author observes, that an uninterrupted course of dissipation *stifles every virtuous sentiment*. The dominion of reason, adds he, is lost amidst the intoxication of pleasure; its voice is no longer heard; its authority no longer respected; the mind no longer strives to surmount temptation; but instead of shunning the perils, which the passions scatter in the way, we run eagerly to pursue them.

Thus speaks the elegant *Zimmerman* on the subject of Dissipation, and *Mrs H. More*, whom we have already quoted with approbation, adds as follows:

“ The contagion of dissipated manners is so deep, so wide, so fatal, that if I was called on to assign the predominant cause of the corruption and misfortunes of the great and gay in our days, I should not look for it principally in any obviously great or striking circumstance, but should, without hesitation, ascribe it to a growing, regular, systematic, series of amusements; to an incessant, boundless, and not very reputable *dissipation*. Other corruptions, though formidable in appearance,

are yet less fatal in some respects, because they leave us intervals to reflect on their turpitude, and spirit to lament their excesses ; but dissipation is the more hopeless, because, by engrossing almost the whole of life, and enervating the whole moral and intellectual system, it leaves neither time for reflection, nor the chance of escaping from the dangerous precipice to which it leads."

So seductive is the power of all-conquering dissipation, that the female votary who enlists herself under its banners, soon becomes an adept in all the arts and tricks of the practised fair ones of the present day, and by drinking Circean draughts of the cup of pleasure, she is very soon transformed from an amiable angel of light to a degrading equality with the beasts that perish. The debility of body, and the weakness and depravity of the mental powers, which too great an attachment to worldly pleasures, and the pursuits of fashionable life, produce, cannot but be, extremely, obvious to every reflecting person, since the most melancholy instances of this truth, daily, present them-

selves to our eyes. Indeed, we have no reason to expect any other result, from the present manners of the fashionable world, but what is adverse to the cause of virtue, and promotive of the interests of vice.

So boundless and intemperate is the pursuit of worldly pleasures, that the small portion of our time which is set apart, by God's command, for his worship and service, is viewed by these votaries of fashion as an intolerable burden, and they cannot resolve to devote one day in seven for the purpose of taking off their thoughts from things temporal, the more effectually to fix them upon things eternal. On the contrary, they prostitute the Lord's day to the celebration of such unhallowed rites as ought scarcely to be tolerated on any day in the week. Mrs. H. More, after having exposed, in the work already quoted, the dreadful consequences of the prevailing irreligion and immorality amongst the higher classes of the community, and particularly the application of the Lord's day to secular interests and concerns, has, with much good sense and sound

reasoning, argued with the professors of worldly pleasure on their own principles; and clearly shewn them that resting one day in seven from their labour, for dissipation, when carried to excess, is labour both of body and mind, would actually increase, instead of diminish, the sum total of their pleasure. This, one might suppose, would be an argument worth the attention of those who calculate only upon the pleasure which this transitory existence can afford; and if the reasoning be fully investigated, it will be perceived to be founded in truth and good sense.

- ✓ The present mode of female attire has, undoubtedly, a very preponderating influence in giving the mind that light and frivolous turn which prepares it for greater advances, whenever seducement presents itself, in the paths of vice. Most writers agree in the opinion that the external decoration of the person is no mean indication of the internal disposition of the mind; and it is well observed by the poet, that

“ Plain, neat, and clean, the man of sense we find,

“ The rest is but the foppery of the mind.”

It is an undoubted fact, that the external appearance, which a person makes, has a very immediate and decided effect on the spectator ; insomuch that, without being sensible of it, we immediately form an opinion of a stranger in his favor, or the opposite, accordingly as his exterior happens to strike us in a favorable or unfavorable light. As this operation of the mind appears to be founded in nature, it may be supposed likely to assist us, considerably, in forming our estimate of the character of others ; since, not being able to penetrate into the thoughts of men, we can only attain a knowledge of their sentiments and character by their words, their looks, and their external appearance and behaviour. It is, indeed, true, that the circumstances and situation in life of individuals may, sometimes, compel them to be governed by the prevailing fashion of the times, with regard to external decorations, when it is much against their better judgment and wishes, that they may avoid the censure of singularity, and the scoffs of contempt and pride : but when a person adopts the extreme of an absurd fashion, especially, if it

ADULTERY ANALYZED,

trench at all upon decency, we cannot easily be mistaken in this criterion of our judgment : and, if the behaviour of the party appear to correspond with these striking circumstances of outward decoration, we may almost venture to pronounce a decisive opinion. How very rare is it for a man, who dresses like a coxcomb, to think and act like a man of sense ; neither do we often behold a female, habited like a courtesan, who has the manners and behaviour of a virtuous woman. If any one, therefore, impressed with this idea, should visit the Italian opera, where this culpable mode of habiliment is carried on to the greatest excess, what conclusion must he form when he beholds the fashionable fair in the pit and boxes vyeing with the shameless dancers on the stage in the extremity of meretricious ornaments of their person : and when he beholds the young and elegant daughters of the nobility dressed in a style which, not long since, was confined to the purlieus of the most infamous brothels ? When, not long since, a late pious prelate spoke in the great council of the nation of the indecency of dress on the

abovementioned stage; and, in consequence of his rebuke, an amendment took place, it might have been hoped that the hint would have been taken by those females who rank themselves amongst modest women. Such effect, however, did not take place. Shame on the corrupted manners of the age—shame on the deluded votaries of an indecent fashion, who, with the precepts of modesty on their lips, practise the behaviour and dress of a courtesan ! When some new and equally absurd fashion shall strike the fancy of a leader of the beau-monde, we may, perhaps, see that effected, by omnipotent fashion, which a whole host of mitred prelates would in vain endeavour to accomplish.

The Author is fully sensible of his hardihood in thus boldly venturing to attack the mysteries of the toilet, and, without permission, presuming to hold them up to vulgar eyes ; but his intention being the same with that of the surgeon who probes a wound, the more effectually to know how to cure it, he must, on the same principle, solicit pardon for the necessity laid on him of saying some things which may

be unpleasant to the ladies ; whose well being and happiness he has nevertheless, sincerely at heart.

The subject of the external decoration of the person cannot be dismissed without noticing the savage custom of painting themselves, which so generally prevails amongst the fashionable part of British females. History tells us, that “ the antient Britons painted their bodies, to render them more formidable in the sight of their enemies,” and the history of modern times will record to posterity, that the fair ladies of these days paint their face, their neck, their shoulders, and even their elbows, for the very opposite purpose of rendering themselves more attractive to the other sex. How absurd is it, then, for the people of one age to ridicule the manners of those of another ! We see that what we have accustomed ourselves to consider as a mark of the barbarity and incivilization of the original inhabitants of this island, the modern British females have adopted, with a very different design, in an age, confessedly, of its greatest refinement. But raillery apart, this custom of painting

which is so common with our modern belles, is in every point of view disgusting to a man of true delicacy. If considered with regard to the thing itself, the habit of laying on the skin a quantity of nauseous and disgusting materials, is repulsive in the highest degree, and is, moreover, from its poisonous effects, destructive to the constitution in a high degree. If considered as an ornament of the person and a heightener of beauty, it must fail of its object with all judicious and sensible persons; since the idea of hypocrisy and deceit, which it is powerfully calculated to excite, must greatly counteract the trifling additional lustre it is supposed to give to the complexion. When we consider, too, the many real charms our fair country women possess, we may safely assert that, it will be found their true interest to worship art less, and nature more, if they would excite emotions of sincere love and virtuous affection in the breasts of the men; or if they would desire to be happy themselves and to contribute to the happiness of their lovers and husbands.

Many years have not rolled over our

heads, since a bold and adventurous female (Mrs. Wolstoncroft Godwin) having stepped forward to vindicate what she conceived to be the injured "*Rights of Woman*," in the warmth of her enthusiasm, recommended "boys and girls to be educated together," and asserts her opinion, that females are equal to all the laborious and arduous occupations which, in the present system of things, are exclusively in the hands of the males. If we go on improving at this rate, and the wild schemes of the above eccentric writer should be carried into effect, we may expect, ere long, that the business of war, manufactures, and commerce, will be delivered over to the ladies, and that our sons or grandsons will be instructed in the sublime occupations of handling the spindle, using the needle, and nursing infants, which last employment our dashing females already conceive beneath their dignity. Until, however, the happy era of the "complete emancipation of the female sex from the tyranny and oppression of man" shall actually arrive, we must console ourselves, as well as we can, with the actual progress which we have already made

in the glorious cause. The supporters of these wild opinions, have no reason to be dissatisfied with their advances hitherto; insomuch, that if they can contrive to silence the few strenuous assertors of virtue and patrons of goodness that are still left in the world, they may entertain confident hopes of chasing religion, virtue, decency, and common sense, entirely from the world.

The ardent passion for theatrical amusements, which seems to be one striking feature of the present times, is productive of various bad consequences, which greatly influence the manners, and contribute to form the taste of the rising generation. The English stage, it is true, is reformed from that gross libertinism which some time ago disgraced it; but yet many things are there represented, as purporting to be a copy of the living manners of the times, which are highly unbecoming for any modest woman to see or hear. Love is the ground-work of almost all our dramatic productions, and this is a sufficient reason for restraining the females of the present times from excessive indulgence in this fashionable amusement.

When the passions are beginning to acquire an almost uncontrollable influence in the female breast, instead of restraining them within just bounds, these seductive representations of the most powerful principle of the human breast, adds fresh fuel to the burning flame. Surely it is not the part of wisdom, nor yet is it consistent with the dictates of sound policy, nightly, to permit our females to behold representations, where parents and guardians are held up as tyrants, placed by an evil genius, over their daughters or wards, in order to vex and torment them ; and that it is, consequently, highly commendable to elude their cares, and to throw themselves into the arms of the first pretty fellow who shall step forward to their rescue. Few people of unbiassed minds and good sense, will venture, seriously, to maintain the affirmative ; and yet such are the exhibitions offered to our eyes and understanding in the theatrical representations of the age.

Another source of corruption is derived from the swarm of novels and high-wrought romances, which infest all our towns and villages through the medium of the circu-

lating libraries, that every petty vender of old books and pamphlets, finds it his interest to set up in all the corners of the kingdom.

The little care which parents, for the most part, take of putting into the hands of their daughters proper books, and the unrestrained permission, usually, given them of reading what books they please, is attended with the most pernicious results ; and may be considered as a principal cause of that disposition to immorality and vice, which so strikingly marks the features of the present day. Were the scarcity of good publications as great as is their abundance, there might be some shadow of excuse for this culpable neglect : but, as the case now stands, the negligent parent is altogether inexcusable. The multiplicity of novels which daily issue from the press, pretend to give a real picture of life and manners, and to hold out lessons of right conduct for the regulation of our behaviour ; but instead of adhering to this pretence, they exhibit manners in a false and dangerous light ; give deceitful and seductive representation of things ;

and contribute to mislead the judgment, warp the opinions, and draw aside the understanding. The pictures which they give of the customs of the world, might not be unsuitable to the ages of romance, but are absurd as applied to the scale of these times. They represent every woman as more than human, every man as a hero ; unmeaning gallantry and insipid compliment form the basis of these flimsy productions ; and they represent the hero or heroine of the piece, as superior to the common frailties of humanity, instead of giving rules to enable mankind to steer, with safety, through the temptations of life.—But this is not the worst : as Mr. Fordyce well observes, “ they represent vices as frailties, and frailties as virtues ; and engender notions unspeakably perverting and inflammatory ;” thus materially contributing to increase the too prevailing disposition, to confound the distinctions between right and wrong, and in process of time to drive morality and religion from the earth.

If we except the works of a very few of our best writers, the tribe of novelists

might, with great advantage, be banished from the female library ; and, in the place of them, a selection of the most improving works might be made from the numerous excellent publications which have come forth within the last half century.

If, in addition to the vast mass of inflammable materials thus introduced into the female mind from play-houses and circulating libraries, we mention that unmeaning gallantry and intoxicating flattery which young men constantly introduce into their ordinary addresses to the other sex, we have reason to be surprized that one woman in a thousand can escape the dreadful contagion. But, in reality, they do not escape ; for, if their immediate ruin be not the effect of such intercourse, they only restrain themselves within the bounds of decorum, from fear of present disgrace and contempt. Their minds, if not their bodies, are completely undone ; and they only wait the covering of the mantle of matrimony to be thrown over them, that they may sin without restraint.

The name of husband, which heretofore has been considered as expressive of every

thing tender and affectionate in human nature, in these times of unbridled licentiousness and dissolute morals, is treated with a degree of indifference and contempt which threatens to dissolve every tie that binds society together, or that can make life desirable. Such is the inevitable consequence of these preposterous manners, which, unless speedily reformed, will leave the best affections of the human heart dormant or useless, and will bring the very worst propensities of our nature into the foreground of the picture.

CHAP. VI.

The new Philosophy.

FEW things have contributed more materially to increase the vice we are now investigating, than the wide spread influence of the modern infidel philosophy, which, of late years, has pervaded all ranks and denominations of men. This insane philosophy has struck at the root of all morality, at the same time that it has attempted to overthrow all sound religion and good government in every part of the world; and has endeavoured to introduce, in the place, anarchy, atheism, and the most abominable licentiousness.

It is worthy of observation, that the pretension set up, by the present illuminators of mankind, to originality in the tenets which they have lately, with so much industry, endeavoured to promulgate, is only an impudent assertion, devoid of any foundation or truth, like all the rest of

their bold and impious assertions. They have but borrowed from the infidels who flourished in the middle of the last century, who themselves borrowed from preceding infidels ; and they did but revive the obsolete tenets of the old heathen philosophers of Greece and Rome. These last shew, in a very striking light, the woeful degeneracy of mankind, when the evil and headstrong passions of the human heart had corrupted reason, and when revelation was wanting to discover the will of the Almighty.

EPICURUS having founded his opinions on the principles of Democritus and Aristippus, taught that “ pleasure was the supreme good of man ;” and that it “ was the height of wisdom to give unbridled licence to all the sensual and gross passions of man.” By principles, such as these, they degraded man from the high and super-eminent rank he had held in the creation, to an equality with the beasts that perish. The celebrated LUCRETIVS became a disciple of this school, and brought this pernicious practice into Rome ; he propagated it very widely

amongst the people, and embellished it with the graces of eloquence and poetry, in his blasphemous work intitled, "*De Rerum Natura*." A work which tended directly to encourage the natural depravity of human nature; to propagate libertine principles, and to flatter vice, could not fail to make many proselytes. Accordingly, in a very short time, this new philosophy spread its pestiferous tenets to a very wide extent; all were more or less infected with the dire contagion; and an almost universal delinquency covered the earth. A political weakness and degeneracy came in, with this corruption of manners, which, melting the virtuous and austere ideas of the Old Romans on the lap of vicious pleasure, made them soon fall a prey to the northern barbarians, who overturned their government, and ruined them as a nation: and at this day, the Italians, who, for many ages, were considered as the masters of the world, by their vices and effeminacy, are degraded to the lowest pitch of moral depravity and intellectual wickedness.

CHRISTIANITY, whose distinguishing

feature is that of placing restraints on the unruly appetites and passions of mankind, might, naturally, be expected to meet great opposition from the host of infidel philosophers, who were the followers and disciples of the sensual Epicurus. Accordingly, from the first moment of its promulgation to the present hour, they have been its most bitter and persevering enemies. It was these determined opponents who rose up against it in the times of the apostles ; it is the same description of persons who, at this day, endeavour to destroy it. To effect this purpose, they have, at different times, broached opinions which struck at its very existence ; and have invented tenets whose object is to root up morality, and annihilate virtue. It has been a favourite axiom with these philosophers, that “ Man is a mere machine ;” and that he acts by necessary and unavoidable impulses, which he has no power to resist or controul. According to this doctrine, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, the first of them who obtruded his opinions, of the above description, on the English nation, has, amongst other wild opinions, asserted, that “ Lust

is no more to be blamed than the thirst occasioned by a dropsy, or the sleepiness produced by the lethargy." Mr. Hume, whose writings and opinions have done incalculable injury to the cause of morality, from the elegance of his compositions, and the celebrity of his name, in express terms declares, that "Adultery must be practised if we would obtain all the advantages of life;" and he frequently repeats the immoral maxim, that "female infidelity is a small thing when known, and when not known, nothing." He says, likewise, that "if it were practised secretly and frequently, it would, by degrees, be thought no crime;" and that, "when generally practised, it would cease to be scandalous." Lord Bolingbroke says, that "Modesty is inspired by prejudice; that the sole foundation of it is vanity, or a wish to shew ourselves superior to mere animals." He likewise says, that "the chief end of man is to gratify the appetites and inclinations of the flesh:" that "Adultery is no violation of the law or religion of nature;" that "all men and women are unchaste:" and "that there is no such thing as conjugal fidelity."

Here is a picture of the philosophical opinions of modern infidels, sufficient to strike the soul with horror, and to sicken the heart with disgust. With regard to the ancient philosophers, who lived before the time of our Saviour's appearance upon earth, some excuse may be, fairly, made for them, on the ground of human reason being corrupted, through the deceitfulness of Sin, and being unable to recover its first purity without a revelation. But the modern infidel philosophers, who live in times when the will and commands of God are distinctly revealed to mankind, have no shadow of excuse: their diabolical principles can only be attributed to their innate love of vice, and hatred of goodness, and to an unconquerable desire of drawing as many as possible into the same degree of misery and condemnation with themselves.

The insidious and persevering attempts of MODERN PHILOSOPHERS to propagate their principles, through the medium of the press, have been repeatedly and fully exposed by the friends of CHRISTIANITY, so that none can be now imposed on by

their flimsy attempts, but he who wilfully joins in the deceit. That excellent writer, Mr. Cumberland, in a small, but useful tract, intitled, "A Few Plain Reasons why we should believe in Christ," &c. which can scarcely be too highly appreciated by the friends of Christianity and true religion ; has not forgotten to touch upon this weighty topic. In the 44th page of the above tract, he says, " They will write novels, histories, dramas to corrupt you ; they will dress up vicious characters in the borrowed cloaths of virtue ; paint adulteresses in amiable, but false colours, to engage your attention and pity ; and exhibit seduction, &c. in lights so fallaciously attractive, as may surprize your passions, and in the unguarded moments of weakness, insinuate their diabolical principles into your incautious hearts. Once more, adds he, I beseech you to beware of them."

In the line of history, the most pernicious may be reckoned " Gibbon's History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire ;" and " Hume's History of England ;" where the celebrated authors of

those works have mixed many sarcasms and much virulence, against Christianity, with elegant language and fine writing; thereby rendering the poison of their tenets more dangerous to the unwary reader. Besides the above works, many others have sprung up with, evidently, the same design that appears to have actuated those writers.

As to the drama, the German writer, Kotzebue, in his popular tragedies of "PIZARRO," and "THE STRANGER," has undertaken the task of rendering female libertinism interesting, by the noble sentiments he puts into the mouth of ELVIRA; and female infidelity, venial, by rendering the wife of Meinau the object of pity; thus insidiously bribing the feelings of the audience to deceive their judgment. These two dramas will be noticed in a subsequent chapter.

With respect to novels, so vast is the number of those which have been written with an express intention to promote the cause of the MODERN PHILOSOPHERS, and to introduce the new order of things, in the moral and political world, that the mind

is lost and bewildered in the almost boundless prospect. To attempt any sketch of them, or even of a very small portion of them, would greatly exceed the limits of this whole work; so that to name one or two of the most pernicious, and to put the reader on his guard against every species of literature which attempts to arrest the public attention, under this title, is as much as can be done here. "The New Heloise," and "The Confessions of Rousseau," may, justly, be considered full as inimical to the cause of virtue, as any thing that has been offered to the public in this walk of literature. It is worth the reader's pains to consult what the pious Madame de Sillery says of these two productions, in her excellent work, "On the Influence of Religion," &c. Vol. II. p. 224.

But beyond all doubt, the most shameless and impudent attempt ever made to subvert morality, and root up religion and the very institution of matrimony, is the open vindication of adultery attempted by that very eccentric character, the late Mrs. Wolstoncroft Godwin, in her insane

production, bearing the title of the "Wrongs of Women." As it is proposed to dedicate a chapter to the consideration of this singular female, it is not necessary to add any thing further on the subject in this place.

While mentioning novels of the most pernicious tendency which abound in the present day, it is but candid to notice one deserving of the highest commendation. "The Modern Philosophers," a novel, in 3 vols. by a Lady, exposes, with very great ability, the principles and tendency of the New Philosophy, and contrasts with them the pure and excellent morality which is taught by our Lord's religion. This justly celebrated performance has been very generally read, both by the patrons of the new doctrines, and by the friends and well-wishers, of the Christian religion. To the former of these readers it has opened most fully the horrible consequences of these doctrines, which, uniformly, bring misery upon their wretched professors, and all that are connected with them: to the latter it had the effect of confirming those sound principles of morality which

are calculated, at the same time, to render men contented and happy in this world, and to give them a just title to a crown of reversionary glory in a future state after death.

It does not appear very difficult to assign reasons for the revival of the old errors and immoral doctrines of the philosophers of ancient Greece and Rome, by the illuminati of the present day. It is a fact, which is justified by the observation of the most intelligent men, and which seems to be founded in the nature of things, that when states and kingdoms are poor, they are virtuous, flourishing, and happy ; when they are grown rich, they become luxurious, vicious, debilitated, and unhappy. This observation is exemplified in the History of Ancient and Modern Rome ; and it is still further corroborated in that of the kingdom in which we live. Great Britain, by her increasing naval power, and almost boundless commerce, which commands the wealth of the world, is become luxurious in a proportionate degree. Luxury and dissipation generate vice : and vicious indulgence will find

those that attempt to excuse or justify it on principle, in persons who are determined, at all events, to practise it. This may be justly considered as the cause of the wide diffusion of the infidel philosophy at this day. Wicked and immoral men are sometimes gifted, by Providence, with very considerable mental powers, which they hesitate not to prostitute in the cause of irreligion, and in the support of vice. What men greatly desire to be true, they very easily persuade themselves is really so. Those, therefore, who determine to give a loose rein to the bad propensities of our corrupt nature, being possessed of weak heads and vicious hearts, which is the general characteristic of unprincipled men, greedily swallow the pernicious doctrines of the enlightened teachers, as they call themselves, of mankind; and their passions being leagued against their reason, they believe such absurd tales as a child, if possessed of clear common sense, would be ashamed to credit. It is for this reason that the insane philosophy of Lord Bolingbroke and other infidels of the same school appears to be daily gaining ground

in this dissipated and luxurious kingdom, and thus, unless some speedy and efficacious remedy be applied, we may, naturally, expect that the universal corruption which it inculcates, will be extended through all ranks and degrees of civil society. We have seen, before our eyes, very lately, in revolutionized France, where immorality and corruption prevail in a high degree, what dreadful effects they are capable of producing; and the like causes will inevitably generate the like effects. If we but advance a very little farther in the path of vicious indulgence and moral depravity, we shall not be able to avoid the fate which has befallen our neighbours; and greater horrors, and worse effects than these, we cannot possibly experience. We may, and probably shall, in the natural course of events, by our vices, induce a revolution in this kingdom more like the late change in France than any other which history presents to our view. We may, very possibly, before any very distant period, be sunk, by our moral and political depravity, to the lowest depth of degradation, and finally, like some of our neigh-

hours, become a province to an aspiring and powerful nation. This great change will be more or less rapid, according as the guardians of our religion, our liberties, and our laws, are more or less attentive to the important charge committed to them. If once they venture to slumber on their posts, then will the sun of Britain be set for ever; and we, who are now the maintainers of good order and good government shall then be a bye-word, a laughing-stock, and the outcast of the earth.

To check the diffusion of this insane philosophy, and, thereby, postpone the fall of this kingdom, ought to be the unwearied endeavour of every true Briton. This cannot be more effectually accomplished, by any means, than by exposing the futility and dreadful consequences which it is calculated to produce; and, by giving every possible encouragement to true religion, which, alone, is able to render us contented in this world, and to give us a right to a crown of felicity in the world to come. Penetrated, therefore, as we ought to be, with a just sense of the

dreadful mischiefs which revolutionary principles have produced, and alive to all the comforts and blessings which sound religion can bestow, let us bend all the powers of our minds and bodies to recover the tone of public manners, to preserve them in their healthful state : and to lay a foundation for their being thus handed down, from father to son, to the latest posterity.

CHAP. VII.

“Pizarro” and “The Stranger.”

THERE are few dramas that have met with that unbounded degree of applause which, for a series of years, has attended those celebrated tragedies of “*PIZARRO*,” and “*THE STRANGER*.” Since the time of Mr. Sheridan’s “*School for Scandal*,” the annals of the theatre have nothing like it on record. The circumstances of the times, when the former was introduced on the English stage, tended, considerably, to procure it success. This kingdom having been, for several years, engaged in a war with the Anarchists and Atheists of France, they, at length, openly threatened to invade our island with an army so vast and powerful, and with preparations so well arranged and so great, that they thought it scarcely possible, that fortune could wrest the palm of victory from their hands. Like Cæsar they were prepared to say,—

“Veni, vidi, vici;” and if fame may be credited had, in imagination, portioned out parts of the kingdom as though they were already conquered. “The army of England,” a vast body of men which they had collected together from all parts for this enterprize, was destined to carry these mighty plans into execution. For a long time this immense body of men hovered on the French coast, ready to embark at the shortest notice; the form, the size, and the number of the vessels destined to transport them to the British shores, were given in the various publications of the day: and the whole world was looking, with ardent expectation that some great event would take place. In the course of the year 1798, the blessing of Almighty God on our Sovereign’s arms, enabled us to obtain two very important victories on the seas; one in the Mediterranean, by the fleet then under the command of the late gallant Admiral Lord Nelson of the Nile; the other off the coast of Ireland, a few months after, which, by defeating the armament intended to be landed there, and preserving to us the entire command of the

sea, effectually relieved us, on that occasion, from the fear of invasion. About this time came out the tragedy of Pizarro ; the hero of which had invaded Peru with a body of Spaniards, and had inflicted great cruelties upon the innocent inhabitants of that country. The cruel and unrelenting vengeance of the leader of this “ band of robbers ;” the noble stand which the inhabitants made against these invaders ; the patriotic sentiments and loyal expressions which fell from the lips of the Peruvian general Rolla, particularly, in his address to the soldiers, Act II. Sc. 2. were circumstances which, at that moment, and in the then temper of the public mind, operated like electricity on the crowded audiences which constantly attended the representation of the piece. The sentiments contained in Rolla’s speech, by no very difficult process, were applied by a British audience to themselves ; the description of the views and sentiments of the invaders of Peru, were applied to the late threatening invaders of this island ; and the sentiment of “ the throne we honour is the people’s choice,” convulsed

the feelings of a loyal and patriotic audience, evidently not reflecting how democratical and inconsistent it is, with our own law of kingly inheritance.

Undoubtedly, whatever tended to encourage sentiments of this nature in the breasts of Britons, at a moment when every thing near and dear to us was attacked, not only by external force, in an open and manly manner, but also by every secret, insidious art of domestic treason, plots, and conspiracies, was to be received and encouraged with the warmest sentiments of applause: for this reason the tragedy of Pizarro met with a great and deserved success on the English stage. It is, therefore, a cause of just regret that we cannot give an unqualified approbation to this popular drama. Certain it is, that, under the veil of sentiments of the most noble nature, lurks the most subtle and dangerous poison; and which is the more to be dreaded, on account of the palatable sweets with which it is compounded; and for the artifice and cunning with which it is concealed.

Led away by the enthusiasm of the feelings, which many of the sentiments in this

piece are adapted to inspire, the superficial observer, would not probably imagine, that the popular play of Pizarro, is the most subtle engine of immorality which has lately appeared on the British stage. The character of Elvira, as will be seen when we come to criticise it minutely, will be found to be the objectionable part of this celebrated drama; and against this danger we wish to guard our readers.

To ascertain, with some degree of distinctness, the danger to be apprehended from the character of Elvira, placed, as it is, in so prominent a light by the Author of this tragedy; we should recollect that sage and true maxim, that "none can be truly great who is not truly good." This sentiment, the author of Pizarro seems either to have forgotten, or, studiously, to have kept out of sight of the audience, or the readers of this favourite drama. The most unobjectionable way of proving the truth of this allegation will be to suffer Elvira to speak for herself.

ELVIRA, the "mistress of Pizarro," owns, in the very beginning of the play, that her attachment to him is an "error;"

and that her "incentive was passion, infatuation, call it" says she "what you will." Passion then, or infatuation, are Elvira's apologists for her attachment to a man, who had just before been described as "ignobly born;" in mind and manners rude, ferocious, and unpolished, though cool and crafty if occasion need;—in youth audacious—ill his first manhood—a licensed pirate—treating men as brutes, the world as booty."—"For a warrior so accomplished," ironically says Valverde, "'tis fit Elvira should leave her noble family, her fame, her home, to share the dangers, humours, and the crimes of such a lover as Pizarro!" Being more closely pressed by Valverde on the subject of her strange attachment to Pizarro, and he declaring, that he "still at that event must wonder," she says—"hear me Valverde!—When first my virgin fancy waked to love, Pizarro was my country's idol. Self-taught, self-raised, and self-supported, he became an hero; and I was formed to be won by glory and renown. 'Tis known that when he left Panama in a slight vessel, his force was not an hundred men. Arrived in the

island of Gallo, with his sword, he drew a line upon the sand, and said—"Pass those who fear to die or conquer with their leader!" Thirteen alone remained, and at the head of these the warrior stood his ground. Even at the moment when my ears first caught this tale, my heart exclaimed "Pizarro is its lord."

Courage, then, and magnanimity were the grounds on which Elvira founded her affection. Had virtue been added to them, her choice would have been right. Deprived of this indispensable ingredient, they degenerated into desperate ambition and brutal ferocity.

To Rolla addressing herself, Elvira says—"Didst thou but know the spell-like arts by which this hypocrite first undermined the virtue of this guileless heart! How, even in the pious sanctuary where I dwelt, by corruption, and by fraud, he practised upon those whom I most confided in, till my distempered fancy led me, step by step, into the abyss of guilt—Didst thou but know my story, Rolla, thou wouldst pity me!"

All this appears very plausible until, very soon after, addressing herself to Pizarro,

she says—"When thy parting hour approaches—hark to the knell, whose dreadful beat will strike to thy despairing soul. Then will vibrate, on thy ear, the curses of the cloistered saint from whom you stole me. Then the last shrieks which burst from my mother's breaking heart as she died, appealing to her God against the base, seducer of her child!—Then the blood-stifled groan of my murdered brother—murdered by thee, fell monster! seeking atonement for his sister's ruined honour." Act IV. Sc. 3.

After the enumeration of such horrid cruelties, could it be believed, if it had not fallen from the lips of Elvira herself, that she could "bear affection" to such a monster? But let us hear her own account of "the sacrifices which" she "made for his sake."—"Have I not, for thee quitted my parents, my friends, my fame, and my native land? When escaping did I not risk, in rushing to thy arms, to bury myself in the bosom of the deep? Have I not shared all thy perils, heavy storms at sea, and frightful 'scapes on shore? Even on this dreadful day, amid the rout of battle, who remained firm and constant at

Pizarro's side? Who presented her bosom as his shield to the assailing foe?" Act III. Sc. 3. Surely it is a thing altogether incredible, had not Elvira herself told us, that she could act in this manner towards the murderer of her mother and her brother.

The author of this tragedy, as if desirous of confounding all distinction between right and wrong, virtue and vice, holds up this woman of passion and infatuation to the admiration of his audience. From the mouth of this votary of illicit passion, this mistress of Pizarro, of the savage and unrelenting Pizarro, such noble sentiments of justice and liberality are made to fall, as could only become, and ought only to proceed from, the mouth of virtue. Of this inconsistency the Author seems to have been well aware, when, at the conclusion of the third act he makes Elvira say:—" 'Tis well, 'tis just I should be humbled—I had forgot myself, and in the cause of innocence assumed the tone of virtue. 'Twas fit I should be rebuked—and by Pizarro!"

In one thing, however, the Author seems to have been quite consistent; and that is.

in depicting, in clear and glowing colours, the alliance which constantly subsists between lust and revenge.

In the soliloquy whence the above extract is taken, at the conclusion of the third act, Elvira says—"How a woman can love, Pizarro, thou hast known too well;—how she can hate, thou hast yet to learn! Come, fearless man, now meet the last and fellest peril of thy life—meet and survive, an injured woman's fury—if thou canst!"

O Kotzebue! Kotzebue! how has the all-powerful hand of truth, wrested from thy heroine the covering of hypocrisy with which she had before concealed herself! How plainly and incontestibly, does it now appear, that the sentiments of feeling, for another's woes proceeded only from the head, while those of "fury" for her own "injuries" proceeded from the heart!

It is perfectly in point to remark, in this place, that the fell passions of fury and revenge never disturb the bosom of virtue. Whatever may be the injuries which she receives, patience and resignation are the only arms which she calls to her aid. If

on earth, she is destined to be tried and purified by the fire of adversity, she is sensible, however unpleasant the trial may be, that "it is good for her that she hath been afflicted." She therefore bows with submission to the will of her Creator, and waits, with patience, for her reward in the highest Heavens. To her the best and the truest consolation is, that "there is another and a better world."

The scene between ROLLA, who is virtue and magnanimity personified, and ELVIRA, in the prison, is very fine. Elvira having come to the determination of assassinating Pizarro; and having brought with her, a dagger, for that purpose, unexpectedly, meets with the brave Rolla in the prison in the place of his friend, who had, by means of the exchange of their habits, escaped from the dungeon. Having, as she conceived, sufficiently, excited Rolla to vengeance, by the warm representation of his country's wrongs; she commits the fatal instrument of her revenge to his more efficacious hand. Rolla asks her.—"Have not you been injured by Pizarro?" "Deeply," says she, "as scorn and insult can infuse

their deadly venom!" Who then can believe her assertion which follows immediately—that "she advances to her dread purpose in the cause of human nature, and at the call of sacred justice!" Well, therefore, does the virtuous Rolla urge—"The God of justice sanctifies no evil as a step to goodness. Great actions cannot be achieved by wicked means."

The sentiments of courage which Elvira displays when her scheme is defeated and she is condemned to cruel tortures for the share which she had in it, is a part of the Author's design, to elevate Elvira to the rank of an heroine in the estimation of the audience: and the precepts of goodness which she is made to utter in the course of the play, naturally, tend to create an idea, diametrically opposite to the first grand principle of morals, that those may be truly great who are not truly good.

For these reasons, the reflecting mind seems compelled to consider the character of Elvira as a great blemish in this popular drama: since it cannot but be considered as inconsistent, contradictory, and tending, by its imposing nature, to promote the

cause of immorality. This is the more to be regretted, as many of the other characters are finely drawn : and if the sentiments of Elvira had come from the mouth of virtue, this drama might have produced as much benefit, as it is now likely to do harm.

Another very popular drama, which has been translated from Kotzebue, and introduced on the English stage, is " **THE STRANGER,**" in which we find a character, for the use which has been made of it, even more exceptionable than that of Elvira. This is **EURELIA**, the unfaithful wife of **Meinau**, disguised as **Mrs. Haller**. In **Elvira**, the character of a female libertine is invested with so many shining qualities, and such noble sentiments proceed from her mouth, that we forget her frailty, and overlook her want of virtue, in the dazzling lustre which is shed around her. This frail female, however, was unmarried, and the Author had but accomplished one half of his laborious and difficult undertaking, till he had made connubial infidelity, and breach of the marriage vow, appear amiable in the opinion of a deceived

audience. This attempt was arduous, but where there is no difficulty to surmount, there can be no honour obtained.

Eurelia, the unfaithful wife of Meinaur, thus relates the process of her ruin. "O, had you known my husband—that excellent, noble man! I was then scarcely passed fourteen. I was two years his wife. O, and even in the moment of my fatal fall, even then, no better man existed. My seducer was far below my husband. The Count, it is true, did not flatter so much, and refused me trifles which my vanity demanded. The silly gratifications which he withheld from me were supplied by my betrayer, and I was child enough to be pleased with the gaudy prospect:—to follow him, who?—but enough!—I returned, but my husband was gone with my children. Alas! the sufferings of those moments no language can describe."

Eurelia's youth—the flattery and attention of her seducer—and her husband, whom she described as "an excellent and noble man," having withheld from her "trifles which her vanity demanded," were the causes of her fall. Are these sufficient

excuses for her dreadful aberration from the paths of virtue? Can these atone for her having ruined the peace of mind of such a man as Meinau is described by his friend Horst to have been? And for her having driven him from the society of men, and urged him even to the borders of madness? Would such contemptible arts from such a man as she describes to be "far below her husband," have produced such an effect, if the divine principles of religion had animated her bosom; if virtue had held its empire in her heart? Assuredly not! The virtuous and the good may be, sometimes, surprized into a fault, and betrayed into actions, in the hurry of contending passions, which may cause them, afterwards, most severe repentance: but there is still such a very marked difference between the extremes of vice, and the high dignity of virtue; and this sentiment is, generally, so deeply implanted in the human breast, that a virtuous and uncorrupted heart, will shrink with innate horror from the dreadful precipice, and be able to appal, with a look, the most smooth-tongued and plausible seducer.

To reconcile the audience to an adulterous wife—to interest their feelings in her behalf—to make them pity her—nay, to cause them, with the generous Horst, to wish for a reconciliation—to effect all this the whole art and address of Kotzebue has been exerted, and, alas! has not been exerted in vain.

The charitable and noble acts of Eurelia—her sincere repentance—her remorse not permitting her even to think of forgiveness—the deplorable condition to which Meinau was reduced by this dreadful blow to his feelings—his still surviving affection in the midst of his heart-rending sorrows—his magnanimity in abstaining from reproaches, both when he spoke of her, and when he saw the person who had driven him to this state of despair—the plan laid by the Count and Baron to effect a reconciliation—and the children, who were the pledges of their early affection, and who, now, were meant to be the potent instruments of producing this reconciliation—these are all traits, which, in the clearest manner, display the superior hand of a master.

If **PIZARRO** be deficient in point of morality, **THE STRANGER** fails in this momentous essential, in a tenfold degree ; inasmuch as female infidelity to the marriage vow is of more extensive injury to the cause of virtue, than the libertinism of an unmarried female. To urge the alleviating circumstances of a most sincere repentance on the part of the erring female—her youth and inexperience, which laid her more open to the snares of seduction—the nobleness of after-conduct—and her self-abasement in thinking herself unworthy of forgiveness ; is but to study devices to impose on the public, and to deceive ourselves. To tolerate vice, at all, is the first step towards being seduced by it ; the rest is gradual, and almost imperceptible. It was a new adventure on the stage to make vice amiable ; and to place female infidelity in a venial point of view. No one could make use of more art, none could have obtained more complete success in the object at which he aimed, than the author of these two popular dramas. To the present hour they are performed to crowded and splendid houses, both in

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the metropolis, and on provincial theatres; and of the vast numbers who attend the oft-repeated representation of them, not one, in a thousand, perhaps, is aware of the danger with which they are fraught. By frequent contemplation of the vices of female libertinism, and connubial infidelity, the mind, insensibly, loses that abhorrence which should ever pursue those who are guilty of them; and from beholding them, coupled with alleviating circumstances and situations calculated to excite emotions of pity, will at length be enabled to contemplate them with indifference, when not attended by these incidental circumstances. By this means, a way will be prepared for the greatest licentiousness and dissolution of morals.

We may now ask our hearts this important question—Whether we need, in the present day, the stimulus of theatrical representations to aid the cause of vice; or whether we have not rather, already, too many supporters of the glaring profligacy, and unprincipled libertinism of the times? Assuredly we have! And whoever can effectually disrobe vice of her hypocritical

covering, and make her appear in her genuine odious colours, will do a most useful and commendable act; but whoever has the power, together with the inclination, to drive such seducing dramas as these which we have now considered, from the public favour, deserves the first rewards which virtue can bestow. Perhaps no single individual, however sincere he may be in the cause, will be able to effect this: it can, perhaps, only be, fully, accomplished, by a number of characters of rank, of consequence, and of estimation in the public favour, uniting together their efforts for this salutary purpose. Such an association of worthies may, by degrees, reform the public taste—rescue the stage from the frivolity and increasing immorality of the favourite play-wrights of the day—and make it the engine, as it is most undoubtedly, capable of being made, of inspiring just and noble sentiments in the breasts of a British audience—and finally, of sinking vice to her proper level, and exalting virtue to her true dignity!!

CHAP. VIII.

Mrs. Wolstoncroft Godwin.

THOUGH many years have elapsed since the death of this eccentric female, and the influence of her writings and example has been commented on by several able pens ; yet the public curiosity is, scarcely, satisfied, nor is this ample subject exhausted. Her writings, as well as her example, coincided, so remarkably, with the object of this investigation, that, perhaps, a few pages may, with considerable propriety, be dedicated to an inquiry into her life and peculiar opinions.

The anonymous author of a publication in 1799, intitled, “ Thoughts on Marriage and Criminal Conversation,” &c. takes a general view of the opinions and example of this singular woman. From the 9th to the 24th page of his pamphlet, he gives us a general idea of the most striking particularities in the life of this lady, as the

same are related by her biographer and husband, Mr. Godwin. In particular, he considers the consequences of her connection with Mr. Imlay ; which, although " a mode of connection which she conceived to be most eligible in human society," as this writer expresses it, was, nevertheless, productive of uncommon misery to herself.

Mrs. W. Godwin appeared before the public as the redoubtable champion of free and unrestrained commerce between the sexes. This intercourse she recommended to be freed from all human ties, and wished it to be guaranteed only by the principle of mutual affection. All other restraints were, in her opinion, to be considered as instances of " the tyranny of the men over the other sex ;" and of " the unjust and partial power conferred, by the laws of matrimony, on the husband." To constancy in affection," founded on the above principle, Mrs. Godwin professed her entire devotion, but alas ! in this favorite wish of her heart, she was cruelly disappointed.

It is, perhaps, as remarkable an instance of the fallibility of human reason as can,

any where, be adduced, that the sacred institution of marriage, which Mrs. Godwin bent the whole force of her talents to vilify, and degrade, should be productive of the most exalted happiness to her; and that her own principle of free commerce between the sexes, unshackled by human ties, or restraints, should have involved her in exquisite misery. Matrimony, the advantages of which, if it possessed any in her eye, she disdained, and "to the restraints of which" she "was resolved never to submit," she nevertheless voluntarily entered into with Mr. Godwin; and the experiment, whatever might be her reasons for making it, proved how greatly she was mistaken in the opinion which she had formed of it; for so long as this union subsisted, it proved to her a source of true felicity; and if her life had been prolonged, this very state seemed to promise to repay her for all the misery which she had previously indured. Her connection with Mr. Imlay, into which, she, likewise, voluntarily, entered, on principles which she thought "the most eligible in human society," brought upon her such an insup-

portable load of wretchedness, that "in the course of it she was twice led to attempt the desperate act of suicide!!"

The above two very extraordinary facts, which we gather from the slight sketch of her life exhibited by her biographer, who considered, in the near degree of relationship, that he stood towards her, can scarcely, be suspected of desiring to injure her character, or to undermine her principles, speak, to the candid mind, with much greater force than a hundred tongues. Thus the practice of Mrs. Godwin was the direct opposite of her principles, and her example, most incontestibly, proved the unsoundness of her visionary plans. Happy is it for the world, that Mrs. Godwin's principles carried with them an antidote to the poison which they contained; like as the serpent which, having stung the incautious traveller, cures him him again, by a proper application of its dead body. Doubtless, every friend to virtue, every well-wisher to connubial happiness, must rejoice, most sincerely, that this lady was thus, inadvertently, the murderess of her own theory, the involun-

tary self-destroyer of her own airy and unsubstantial system of happiness.

The veracity and ingenuousness of Mrs. Godwin's habits, are endeavoured to be placed in a conspicuous light, by her biographer ; but it is, surely, no very striking proof of this quality that, as the Author of "Thoughts on Marriage," &c. well observes, p. 19, &c. this celebrated lady should, in her publication entitled "The Wrongs of Woman, &c." transfer all this mighty load of unparralleled misery, which she endured in her unmarried state, and which was inflicted by a man with whom she had formed that kind of connection, which she conceived to be the most eligible in nature ; that she should transfer it all to a supposed sufferer under the bonds of matrimony. How is this consistent either with truth or ingenuousness ? Besides, what opinion can we form of that person, who can deliberately attempt to assassinate the happiness of the married world ; and coolly try to root up, from its very foundations, the holy and blessed state of matrimony, from which very institution, she derived whatever of happi-

ness she was permitted to taste upon earth? But what shall we say of her who vilely, maliciously, and, in the most ungrateful manner, can charge upon the sacred institution of matrimony, "which was ordained in the time of man's innocency by God himself," and which, as we have remarked, had produced such solid comfort and happiness to herself; that she should charge against this very condition, all the miseries and wretchedness which she had herself endured, in that very same unhallowed state which she patronised by her writings, and which she falsely endeavoured to support by her own example? How all this is consistent with common honesty, is a question which may fairly be asked of the biographer of Mary!!!

Had Mrs. Godwin restrained her sentiment of disapprobation against the institution of matrimony within her own breast, as well as the too partial opinion which she entertained of the kind of connection into which she thought fit to enter with Mr. Imlay; and had quietly fallen a victim to this mistaken opinion, the writer of this criticism would have dropped the tear

of regret on her grave ; and would have been so far from raking, with ill-nature or apparent rancour in her ashes, that he would have permitted her memory to rest in peace : but since she has thought proper to print and diffuse, as widely as possible, these enormous and very dangerous opinions, and the celebrity of her name insured those writings an extensive circulation, the tenderness due to the individual is swallowed up by the duty which is owed to the public ; and it makes a part of the design of this publication to detect the mischiefs, and to lay open the multiplied dangers of her immoral sentiments and actions.

Now inasmuch as vast numbers, before Mrs. Wolstoncroft, have entertained the same derogatory opinion of matrimony which she so publicly professed, and have endeavoured to strengthen their system, by every artifice which jesuitical reasoning can suggest ; it may not, here, be improper to bestow a few words on this important subject. As the persons who usually encourage these sentiments exclude religion from their plan, at least that kind of reli-

gion which enables them to look beyond the present transitory life, we must argue with them upon principles which leave religion totally out of the question. Upon this hypothesis, then, let us examine Mrs. Godwin's system of the "unrestrained commerce of the sexes."

It is supposed that her partisans will not attempt to deny that, let the cause be what it will, a great deal of deceit, of hypocrisy, and of wickedness, has crept into the world. No one, it is imagined, possessed of common sense and reflection, will presume to deny a position which is, alas! so palpable to the most superficial observer, and which, in fact, produces, through the wide of the world which we inhabit, such abundant crops of misery to the sons of men. If, then, the above position be granted, it will be found the part of temporal wisdom, to guard against the ill effects of such bad principles, by every means that human foresight and abilities can suggest. But still further—Man is so mutable a creature, and so constantly is he changing his opinions of every thing around him, that it is absolutely necessary,

for some sound and determinate principles of reliance and good faith, to be established between one human being and another ; in order that the common business of life, should be carried on with tolerable convenience. The intercourse, also, between the sexes, as well as the ordinary affairs of commerce and business between man and man, must, in like manner, be governed by some fixed principles to which the parties may resort, in cases of mutual disagreement, which at one time or another will inevitably happen. The wisdom, therefore, of the laws of this realm, which alone the Author of these sheets thinks necessary to mention in this particular case, hath compelled those who enter into this state of matrimony, mutually, to declare their determination of keeping constant to each other so long as they both shall live. Now it has already been observed, that Mrs. Godwin entirely approves the principle of constancy in affection, while she as much disapproves the forms and restrictions of matrimony, which are intended to secure it. Whether, however, it be Eloisa

or Mrs. Godwin that asserts, that
Love

“ ——— at sight of human ties,

“ Spreads his light wings, and in a moment flies.”

The assertion, in either case, we may depend upon it will be found, to be not only groundless, but utterly inimical to the interests of virtue, honour, and religion. It is groundless, because, the man who is penetrated with a sincere and virtuous passion for an amiable woman, will be so far from thinking this engagement a hardship, that he will consider it a satisfaction to give the partner of his affections, the future sharer of his pleasures, and consoler of his griefs, every assurance of his truth and honour that can be desired. The assertion, likewise, militates particularly, against the interests of virtue, because, it puts the abandoned wanton and the virtuous woman, on one level ; by making them both the plaything of a moment, and giving no security for generous treatment and kind conduct, when the ebullitions of momentary gratification have passed away.

The essence of all the libertine argu-

ments against the institution of marriage, which are, or possibly can be, urged, may be reduced to this point. If human beings be thus changeable in their sentiments, and continually fluctuating in their opinions, to day disliking what was yesterday their greatest pleasure ; how absurd and irrational is it to make two such changeable animals swear, they will love each other till death !

Let us consider this objection with some exactness, as the whole hinge of the argument seems to turn upon it.

In the investigation of this argument, it is necessary to take into consideration the circumstances of a man and woman, at the time of their being mutually desirous of forming this closest possible alliance with each other. We must imagine, then, that a young man has passed through such a course of education as may fit him to maintain, with becoming dignity, that rank in society to which he was born. This youth has, involuntarily, fixed his affection upon an amiable and virtuous object of the other sex : his affection is returned ; and they wish to bring their mutual de-

sires to a happy termination. To promote this object, the suitor waits on the father of the object of his affections—states the fervency of his attachment—and asks his approbation of his suit. If the character and other circumstances of the suitor be approved, the father will, naturally, mention the affection he entertains for his child. Will represent her as the dear pledge of affection betwixt himself and the loved partner of his heart. From her birth to the present moment, his attention has been bent to instil virtuous principles into her mind, and to render her an ornament to society. In surrendering her to an husband's affection, he gives the strongest proof of the high opinion he entertains of the truth and honour of the man to whom he commits so dear a pledge. When she leaves the paternal roof, though no longer in his sight, she is present to his remembrance : her posterity will add vigour to his declining years, her unhappiness will bring his grey hairs with sorrow to the grave.

When addressed in terms like these, the suitor, if really a man of honour, will not

hesitate to confirm, with holy vows, the sincerity of his passion ; he will be anxious to put it out of his power to ill-treat the tender object of his virtuous love. Safely, therefore, may he vow an unfading affection, when the basis of his passion is virtue, and the superstructure is female dignity and worth. A plan of happiness, constructed with such materials as these, will last as long as life remains : it will heighten and double all his enjoyments ; solace his hours of adversity, and give him a foretaste of heaven upon earth.

Avaunt, then, ye professors of a vain and impious philosophy, which, by undermining the principles of virtue, and by endeavouring to confound the distinctions between right and wrong, seek to root out from the earth that remnant of honour and moral rectitude which yet remains, and to annihilate every principle of confidence between man and man ; whilst your theory would make misery, and vice, and unbridled licentiousness triumphant upon earth !

“ All hail, thou amiable and engaging deity, connubial honour, and wedded love ;

thou image of the bliss and joys which the good will enjoy in a future, glorious, and immortal state. Condescend to inhabit, still, this earth, from which insidious vice hath so, unremittingly, endeavoured to banish thee! Subdue, gentle power, by thy mild, yet potent influence, the hardened and unblushing front of lawless and ungoverned passions. I invoke thee in the name of Virtue, Nature, Goodness, and Truth! I call on thee in the insulted and almost forgotten name of Nature's God,"
—Zimmerman on Solitude.

CHAP. IX.

Courtship.

OF all the vast variety of affections which influence the human heart, none is capable of affording more delightful sensations, than that irresistible impulse, implanted by the hand of Providence, for wise and good reasons, in the constitution of human nature, by which the different sexes are mutually attracted towards each other. When this natural impulse confines itself to one object, equal and worthy of itself, it is denominated love; the declaration of this passion is called courtship, which all writers agree in considering the happiest period of human life.

To investigate, in this place, the propriety or impropriety of lodging the power of declaring the sentiment of love to the object which inspires it, in the male or female, might indeed be a curious and entertaining inquiry; but it is not, how-

ever, necessary, to the intention of this work ; those persons, nevertheless, who are desirous of gratifying their curiosity on that point, may consult Dr. Alexander's "*History of Woman*," Vol. II. Chap. xxiii. where they will find every satisfaction they can wish.

The Dr. assumes a proposition, which few, it is supposed, will be found inclined, seriously, to controvert, ; viz. that " the declaration of the sentiment of love is a privilege of the men, founded on nature, and sanctioned by custom : " and though he speaks with great modesty of his account of " the various modes of making that declaration by the men, and of accepting or refusing their offers by the women ; " the traits which he gives us of these customs, in different ages, and different countries, are such as will afford the highest satisfaction to the curious reader, as well as much useful information to the philosophical inquirer into the history of human nature. Notwithstanding, however, the Dr. in his curious and entertaining work, has enumerated many countries " where the women court the men," yet,

as these instances must be considered rather as extraordinary deviations from the general rule, than as the just measure and standard of it, we shall pass them by as matters of mere curiosity, and, in this chapter, consider some of the circumstances which usually accompany the season of courtship, with a view to the avowed object of the work.

In times of barbarism and incivilization, the passion of love was not a feeling of sentiment. On the contrary, animal gratification, and the mutual conveniences which were found to result from the cohabitation of males and females for the term of life, were almost the only ingredients which entered into the composition of this passion amongst our rude progenitors, in those times of ignorance and mental darkness. It is to times of greater refinement, when arts and politeness have made a considerable progress among mankind, that we are to look for those "obliging offices of gallantry," those "tender attentions of courtship," which so greatly ameliorate the condition of women in social life. In England, in the present times, as well as in

several neighbouring countries, the most marked attention; the most tender assiduity; the most gallant air and obliging manner; usually distinguish the man who has imbibed a passion of this description for an amiable and virtuous woman. The idea of SELF appears to be obliterated, and that of the beloved object to have taken full possession of the breast of an English lover: he truly lives, only, in the presence of her, whose image is impressed on his heart, whilst he merely vegetates and exists when absent from her. Such being the operation of 'a virtuous passion, in the breast of a worthy man, we need not be surprized that it is so often described as being capable of inspiring such pleasing emotions, and of conferring such bliss, as no other affection of our nature can possibly accomplish. Not only does it confer pure and genuine happiness upon man, but it also purifies and exalts his nature; lifting it up to a pitch of excellence which it could not, otherwise, attain. If we but impartially note the effects which it commonly produces, it will appear that the man who is inspired with it, desiring,

above all things, to recommend himself to the object of his tender wishes; reaches forward to every degree of excellence, and, as sedulously, casts behind him whatever may tend to shew him in a degrading point of view. All low, all sordid, all vicious pursuits he, carefully, shuns; all noble, all generous, all virtuous actions he practises, spontaneously. The man who was clownish, unpolished, and ill-bred, it has the power of rendering polite and agreeable; and he who was churlish, morose, and ill-natured, it can change to the very form of gentleness, affability, and good humour. These are the powerful effects which almighty love can produce on the nature of man; may then its blessed influence extend as wide as the world itself, and may it last till time shall be swallowed up in the abyss of eternity.

Productive, however, of many and great advantages as this passion, indisputably, is, yet are there some disadvantages common to either sex, in which, without great care, it will certainly involve its votaries. Whoever is under the dominion of any strong prejudice; and the passion of love

is, of all prejudices, the strongest; is by no means in a fit state to think or to judge for himself, in matters, where his prejudices are concerned. So that the man who is bewildered in the mazes of this blind and delicious passion, is apt to magnify the perfections of the beloved object, and to apply the diminishing end of the glass to all her foibles; and what human being is there, male or female, who has not many of them? The lover, too often, deaf to the warning voice of friendship, or of parental affection, which is able to discern faults with an unprejudiced eye, rushes boldly, and it may be almost said, hardily, into matrimony; and opens his eyes to the folly which he has committed, in selecting a partner for life, whose habits and whose disposition are so unlike his own, when his penitence is vain, and his error is irretrievable. Daily do we see instances of this unwise conduct, which fill the mind with sorrow, and which force conviction upon us, that blind prejudice, in favor of an object that is unworthy of our regard, is one principal cause of that widely

extended unhappiness which is so prevalent in the married world.

Great, however, as is the fault which we have now remarked, yet is the opposite one, that of a total indifference, and even in some cases of a positive dislike, in one or other of the contracting parties, which it is intended to remark in the ensuing chapter, still more fatal to happiness or comfort in the married state.

There is one very general error, which seems common to males as well as to females who are engaged in the pleasing attentions of courtship, arising from the deception which the parties are apt, respectively, to impose on themselves, as to their own peculiar dispositions and ways of thinking. Not only do they commonly see the character of the person for whom they have imbibed this kind of attachment through a very prejudicial medium, but their own character is likewise liable to the same enormous and mistaken judgment. In many cases, this self-deception is involuntary, and it may almost be said unavoidable. Engaged in such a line of

conduct, the object of which is to render them acceptable to that individual whose image is stamped on their heart ; they are apt to imagine, that no trouble uor difficulties are too great to encounter, if they can but attain the summit of their wishes, that of rendering themselves pleasing to the beloved object. A man who is in love, studies, only, to recommend himself to the possessor of his affections, sees as she sees, thinks as she thinks, acts as she acts. Unconscious that this conduct is opposite to his natural disposition, he imagines that he shall for ever thus think and thus act, as does the object of his fond regards. Nothing, however, can be further from the truth than such a persuasion. No sooner is he united, by marriage, to the desired object, than his natural disposition begins to shew itself; and, oftentimes, with the greater force for the violence which has been put upon it. Exactly like a stream, which by art and force has been turned out of its natural channel, it, at length, breaks down the mounds which had been opposed to it, and then rushes, with increased fury, to the course from which it

had been for a short time diverted ; the restraints which, in this manner, have been opposed to the thoughts and actions of men, cause them to return with more violence to their natural habits, the instant that these restraints are, by matrimony, removed.

For these reasons, we are led to conclude, that parties who view each other through the partial medium of affection, oftentimes impose on each other, and on themselves, without perceiving it, with regard to the customs, habits, and ways of thinking which they, in reality, possess : and it will surely be allowed, that this deception, in a matter of such vast importance, lays the foundation for a gradual alienation of regard from each other, when they afterwards enter the married state : and this unhappy change may lead to the violation of that troth which they have mutually plighted to each other.

It will be, sufficiently, obvious to the discriminating reader, that the courtship, which we have spoken of, is founded on the idea that both of the parties are inspired by a virtuous passion for each other ; and

that honourable matrimony is intended to be the conclusion of it. That this, however, is not the real, however it may be the ostensible, motive of many artful libertines, who make it a cloak for their villainous designs on the other sex, is too obvious to require any proof. But if there be a thunderbolt in the hand of Omnipotence, of more than ordinary vengeance, it must descend on the head of that wretch, who, under the sacred garb of tender and virtuous love, conceals the most diabolical designs; and after plundering the unsuspecting maiden of the treasure of innocence, leaves her to bewail the sad effects of her credulity; and perhaps to fall a gradual victim to unavailing and irremediable woe. With respect to the amiable and unsuspecting victims of a licentious seducer, let us hope, that the temporal sufferings which they undergo upon earth, will atone for their errors; and that the radiant countenance of mercy will, hereafter, soften the stern front of justice; and that when this transitory scene is closed upon their sorrows, they will enjoy peace and happiness in the realms of eternity!

Here we shall close our full investigation of that most important period of our lives, the season of courtship, which we may perceive has so great an influence on the future stages of our existence ; and in the following chapter consider, with some degree of minuteness and attention, the state of matrimony.

C H A P. X.

Matrimony.

MATRIMONY, or marriage, in Great Britain, is the sacred union of one man and one woman, by the hands of a lawful minister, on their swearing, at the altar, in the form prescribed by the office of matrimony, that they will love one another, and be faithful to each other, for the period of their joint lives. This union, as we have noted, is to last during the continuance of the joint lives of the contracting parties; unless the woman should, hereafter, be proved, in a fit court, and by competent witnesses, to have committed the crime of **ADULTERY**. That the matrimonial union should last as long as both the parties live, is evident, from the words of our blessed Saviour, which are with much propriety introduced into the ceremony itself! "Whom God, says he, has joined together, let no man put asun-

der." God, who hath joined them together, by the mouth of his minister, may dissolve this union by the stroke of death; but man, who is but the agent of God, hath no power committed to him so to do; except it be in the single case of adultery committed by the woman. And it is quite right that this union should last so long, as may be proved by the great inconveniences which would be the consequences of its shorter continuance; as well as from other arguments which might very easily be adduced.

If the marriage were dissolvable at the option of either party, or for any slight or trivial matter which might occur; endless would be the mischiefs that would arise therefrom, both to the parties themselves, and to society. The grand inducement to love, peace, and constancy, would be done away: the trust and confidence of friendship would be destroyed: the assurance of consolation in distress, of support in the hour of sickness, and of society in the dreary period of old age, would, by this mean, be taken away: the best interests of families would be distracted; the nume-

rous evils of human life would be augmented; and the comforts and blessings of it would be annihilated.

Thus, whether we consider it in a religious, or in a social, point of view, the inconvenience of a permission to dissolve the nuptial tie, on slight pretences, would be very great; and, therefore, all wise legislatures have guarded, carefully, against it.

In France, of late years, the wise and admirable institution of marriage has been almost abolished. A modern writer tells us, that "properly speaking, there are no marriages in that country; it being concubinage, and not marriage, which there prevails. The connection which they call an union, says he, is dissolved on the slightest grounds." In the year 1799, the number of marriages were only six times as great as the number of divorces. "Thus," continues the writer, "under the pretence of raising the female sex to their rights and privileges, they have been degraded from that respectable rank which they, deservedly, hold in the civilized world. And from being esteemed the rational and moral

companions of man ; the sweetner of all his enjoyments, the partner of his distresses, woman is condemned to be the slave of folly and caprice." Thus the delicate and refined sentiment of love is converted into a vulgar passion ; the happiness of the married state is dissolved ; the bond between parents and children, brothers and sisters, is weakened, if not destroyed. The consequence of such a law would be of the most pernicious nature, and, if continued, would, in a few years, produce universal licentiousness.

The inhabitants of this island have not yet arrived at that degree of licentiousness and immorality, that we can " put away our wives for every cause ;" but the daily increase of divorces, in these kingdoms, on pretence of the woman's infidelity, loudly proclaims the relaxation of our morals, and the increase of vice amongst us. But what renders the matter still more lamentable is, that our nobles, who ought to set an example of virtuous manners and sound morality, are the first to uphold the cause of vice, both by their precepts and example. Such conduct is a

disgrace to nobility ; scandalous in any who lay pretensions to the name of Christian ; and utterly contemptible in the character of a man. It is lamentable to consider, that some of the most exalted of the nobility live in a cheerless unsocial state of celibacy, diversified only by political manœuvres, tending to obstruct the wheels of government, or to support a party, the designs of which are well understood by the friends of the constitution, and are opposed with a zeal suitable to the cause in which they are engaged. Others of our nobility there are, who, being united to amiable and charming women, by the sacred bond of matrimony, instead of shewing a praiseworthy example of connubial felicity, basely betray the confidence of friendship, by seducing the wives of their friends into the paths of vice : conduct which must ever receive the marked detestation of the sincere Christian. The splendid vices of the great can dazzle only the weak eyes of those who are themselves wretched and profligate, whilst, in the sight of the truly pious and good man, the star which glitters on the breast of

nobility will lose all its lustre when it is known that vice reigns beneath it.

Since marriage is a ceremony "instituted by God himself in the time of man's innocency," and is declared by the sacred writings, to be "honourable amongst all men;" it may easily be demonstrated, by arguments, which cannot be controverted, to be the general duty incumbent upon all men to enter into it. Placed upon earth as we are, confessedly in a state of probation and trial, where we are intended, to remain only a very short time, and then are to be transplanted to another scene which will last for ever; how are the generations of man to be supplied, when they are successively swept off the earth by accidents, diseases, and the common course of nature? Undoubtedly by the union of one man with one woman in the bonds of holy wedlock. It may, therefore, be truly asserted, that man hath not fulfilled every duty that is incumbent on him, neither hath he applied all the powers which have been committed to him, to the best purposes of which they are capable, when he has merely led a blameless and exemplary

moral life. The relative and social passions, which rule with such power in the human breast, and which are capable of adding, so materially, to the sum of his happiness ; and the necessity of the plan of Providence being carried on by other agents, when we ourselves are removed, seem clearly to point out to us, the duty of endeavouring to leave behind us some posterity to supply our place, in the creation, when the Almighty disposer of events shall be pleased to call us to himself. In order to fulfil this design of the Deity, it is not, however, sufficient that a man should indulge that natural propensity to multiply his kind, which seems so deeply implanted in the nature of every living thing, by giving a loose rein to vagrant and indiscriminate lust, like brute beasts that have no understanding ; but he should be content to submit to such wholesome restraints, in the indulgence of these natural propensities, as divine and human laws have determined to be necessary for the happiness of individuals and of society at large. MATRIMONY is that institution, sanctioned by the laws of God and man,

which, by regulating the commerce between the sexes, wisely wards off the mischiefs it would otherwise produce, and purifies and exalts the pleasures it is capable of affording.

Besides the argument in favour of matrimony, from the consideration of its being a religious duty, for all persons who have not some natural impediment, to enter into it, it might be still further urged, from the temporal and personal inconveniences of those who refrain from it. Let us imagine a man who, from some cause which he deems sufficient, has not entered into this state till after he has passed the middle period of life : what a forlorn, what a miserable being is he ! Immersed, in general, in a constant scene of dissipation, with a constitution debilitated, and a fortune impaired if not ruined ; the friends of his youth, some of them settled happily with a family of promising children ; others, the companions of his unhallowed orgies, swept off, prematurely, to an early grave, or else, like himself, left to bewail the miseries of a protracted existence : what comfort can arise from the retrospection of his past

life, or from the expectation of that part of it which is yet before him? If fancy picture to his imagination the scenes which are past, not one comfortable reflection consoles him for the remembrance of the vain, unprofitable, and unsatisfactory pursuits in which he has been engaged. If he look forward, dark and dreary, dismal and melancholy is the prospect, beyond the power of words, adequately, to describe! With nothing to fill up the dreadful void which is in his soul; the treasures of his youth lavished upon wantons, who caressed and despised, smiled, and at the same time betrayed, him; behold him declining into the vale of years, smarting under the effects of the vices and follies of his youth, and with none of the consolations of virtuous love to sooth his bed of sorrow!

No wife, with anxious care, to watch over his sickness; no child, with filial affection, to smooth his pillow, and to extend to him the thousand nameless offices which affection dictates; he sees himself surrounded on all sides by harpies, who attend him only from mercenary motives,

and who watch over him as an eagle over a carcase, that they may feast on his spoils ; or if distant relatives, whom he had disregarded and despised in the gay days of frolicsome mirth and wantonness, should be drawn to him by the report of his approaching dissolution, they are only attracted by the hope that he, who had so long lived for himself alone, may, at his death, leave a portion, and afford accommodation and comforts to others. Such are the usual effects of cheerless unsocial **CELIBACY** ; may those who peruse this faithful picture, be induced to avoid the discomforts and inconveniences to which it subjects its votaries !

MATRIMONY being thus, both the duty and the interest of all men, it ought well to be observed that, as it is the most consequential act of a man's life which gives a colour to his future destiny, and renders him happy or unhappy according as he enters into it on good or on bad principles, it is, therefore, a step which every wise man should take with the greatest possible caution.

In the last chapter, we enumerated

some of the self-deceptions, both with regard to their own real sentiments and to the object of their virtuous affections, which those, who are blinded by the partiality of LOVE, are apt to impose upon themselves. It may here be remarked, that those who mean the best, and are actuated by the most worthy motives, are most liable to be deluded by this self-deceit; because, the medium of prejudice, through which they behold the beloved object, makes them blind to her imperfections; while those who are governed by unworthy motives, not being sincere in their professions of attachment, can never be imposed on by these prejudices.

It must still be owned, that the most fruitful causes of unhappiness in the married world, take their origin from the too prevailing customs of bringing together, from undue and unworthy reasons, those who, at the best, are merely indifferent to each other; sometimes also, one of the parties has a positive aversion to the partner selected for him or her; and in the last place they are altogether dissimilar in

praise that it can be susceptible of: in a word, an existence devoid of affection, a protracted life destitute of love. Can the man possessing the common feelings and passions of human nature, sit down contented with such a lot as this? Should he happen to be endowed with lively feelings, must he not be wretched and curse the hour which involved him in so untoward a fate? But for the most part, alliances of so close and intimate a nature as the nuptial tie, do not, long, continue free from positive ill-consequences when entered into in this light and inconsiderate manner. Connections of this kind begun in indifference, frequently, in a short time, lead to disgust; and then it cannot be considered as a matter of surprize, if misery, wretchedness, and infidelity, should close the horrid scene.

If then mere indifference in the parties who enter into the state of wedlock, frequently produce these dreadful effects, which all who possess unbiassed reason will readily acknowledge, what can we naturally expect from those vast numbers, who, through base and mercenary motives,

every day swear an unalterable fidelity to the person, who at the moment of taking on them that solemn oath they despise in their heart? That many enter into the marriage state with sentiments of this kind, for the man whom they espouse, is too obvious to require any proof. Assuredly, they who so basely prostitute a ceremony, the most serious which can engage the attention of a reasonable being, to the purposes of wordly gain and ambition, give us every reason to conclude that, when an opportunity presents itself, they will, with equal indifference, prostitute their person: and as the happiness of their husband was the farthest from their thoughts when they first united themselves to him, so in the progress of the connection, his honour and their own reputation will be offered up as sacrifices on the altar of their unhallowed and impure desires. So long as men and women act from a principle of selfishness, which regards only its own gratification, and is indifferent to the comfort or happiness of others, we may, naturally, expect such catastrophes as these to happen in the married world, as well as every thing else

that can render them uncomfortable in their progress through life. When, for instance, we see old and worn out debauchees, for the sake of gratifying a mean and detestable animal passion, espousing young and beautiful women ; and young women possessed of every external charm, sacrificing themselves to these old lechers for the sake of the wealth and splendour which surround them, can we hesitate to determine that such unworthy incentives, on both sides, must plunge the votaries of these ignoble motives into every species of wretchedness, which such conduct deserves? Though it will be allowed, that those who voluntarily enter the state of matrimony, from such base considerations, meet only the just punishment of their wicked folly, in the misery which they endure ; yet it must be confessed, that those who are forced into the married state under the same unhappy circumstances, are deserving of the utmost pity. What words can describe the guilt of those parents who, blinded by the splendour of riches and titles, force their unhappy offspring into embraces which they detest ! Certainly

those who act in this cruel and tyrannical manner, do but prostitute their children in a legal way, and must be considered as highly instrumental in all the crimes which they afterwards commit; and even, at the best, they must render the future life of their child miserable. Poor, indeed, must be the consolation which a father, possessed of any feeling beyond that of avarice, can derive from the reflection that he has rendered his daughter rich, when he is compelled to behold, that in proportion as he has added to her external lustre, he has detracted from her internal comfort; and that the very best which he can hope from his ill-connected scheme of aggrandizement is, that she must drag on a wretched existence, surrounded by SPLENDID MISERY. Should the sense of religion, happen to restrain her from violating the marriage vow, which, considering every circumstance, there is very little reason to expect, she must mourn in secret; and in the end, perhaps, sink heart-broken into a premature grave.

Such are the dreadful consequences of those unequal and ill sorted alliances,

which every day present themselves to our observation in the married world: and these consequences must ever flow from marriages entered into upon principles, which are equally a disgrace to that person who lays claim to the character of a christian, or of any degree of delicacy or proper feeling.

We have thus depicted the state of matrimony, when entered into with improper views, more agreeably to what we find it to be, than to what we would wish it to prove; it is necessity and not inclination, which compels us to exhibit human nature in a degrading light. The nature of our undertaking, compels us to fathom the depths of the dark and subtle vice adultery; and when we have traced it to some of its principal sources, we shall endeavour to apply a remedy. We shall here close this chapter, which has, for its object, the inquiry into some of those inducements which prevail upon mankind to enter into the married state. To set more worthy motives before men, and to offer some advice likely to contribute to ma-

trimonial felicity, will be the subject of a future part of this work. We now proceed, to consider in what manner it, frequently, happens, that married persons behave themselves improperly towards each other.

CHAP. XI.

Conduct of the married life.

THAT most intimate union of a man and woman, in the married state, where their persons and their interests are so blended together, that in a legal, moral, and political light, they are considered to be the same, undoubtedly, requires the nicest care and attention, on the one hand, to keep clear of the thousand dangers which encompass that condition, and which, without this care, must render it wretched; and, on the other, to secure all the advantages which are annexed to it, and which, if, properly, cultivated, are capable of rendering mortals as happy as they can be in this imperfect state upon earth. We will, therefore, now proceed to take a short view of the general conduct of those who enter into this state.

It has been often remarked, that no two conditions can be more opposite to

each other, than those of courtship and of matrimony ; and the effects which they produce are as different as are the circumstances of the two conditions. In the former of these states, we have remarked, that the man seems to give up his own opinions in complaisant deference to the woman, who has made an impression on his heart : in the latter it, too frequently, happens, that he seems to have determined to compensate himself for the submission he has, unwillingly, paid to the woman, during the season of courtship, by exacting from her the most unlimited obedience to his will, so long as the union shall continue. Whenever these very opposite lines of conduct take place, they are equally injudicious, and equally hostile to happiness, as a small degree of attention may convince us.

When two rational beings, a man and woman, determine, for good and sufficient reasons, to pass the remainder of their joint lives in so close a connection as that of the nuptial bond, they will, if guided, by maxims of prudence and discretion, study to conduct themselves in such a

manner as may best advance the mutual comfort and happiness of each other. Indeed this is the only justifiable reason for either the one or the other of the parties entering into that state. Now it must be considered, that as they are, both of them, weak and fallible beings, many things must, of necessity, arise in the course of this connection, which will require mutual forbearance, and mutual charity; consequently, they should neither of them be obstinately attached to their own particular opinions; neither of them should require greater sacrifices than the other can make with perfect satisfaction. No man of generosity, of good sense, or of true delicacy, will require any woman to make such sacrifices of her judgment or understanding as are degrading to a rational being; but will exercise that superiority with which nature seems to have invested him, with a kindness and gentleness which may convince the woman, that affection, and a desire to advance her happiness in conjunction with his own, are the sole causes of the opposition which he makes to her opinions. Such kind behaviour as

this will rivet the chains of affection on the female mind in the most pleasing manner; and will make their mutual felicity as durable as their existence.

It is a fact well deserving our very serious attention, that if nature hath given to the man greater depth and solidity of understanding than has been allotted to the woman, the latter has received a compensation in that quickness and acuteness of intellect which is, frequently, of the most material advantage in the ordinary occurrences of life. The consideration, therefore, of the fallibility of all human beings, and of the many inadvertencies, oversights, and mistakes from which the most enlightened men are not, in the least, exempt, should impress the lesson of humility on the mind of man; and teach him to distrust his judgment, to think, moderately, of the advantages which, in some respects, nature appears to have given him over the woman; and ever to be ready to avail himself of the advice of her whose interest is so intimately blended with his own. Let him treat that tender and affectionate helpmate, which the Al-

mighty hath provided to solace his sorrows, and to share his joys, as his equal; and let him not presume, at any time, to treat her as his slave.

Should any one inquire, whether this be the general rule of conduct in the married world, it must, with pain and sorrow be confessed, that it is not: and to this unwise conduct, perhaps, may be attributed a large portion of that unhappiness which is so prevalent in the married world.

The idea of the great superiority of the male, over the female, in respect to bodily strength, is too apt to be extended to the mental powers, where that superiority is, by no means, either so apparent or so real; and this idea is, frequently, and deeply impressed on the minds of ungenerous men, who are very powerfully influenced by it, both in their sentiments and actions. Of those who exercise the power which they possess in an unjust or tyrannical manner, it may be truly said, that they do not deserve to be happy, but we have every reason to commiserate the fate of those wretched women who are destined to spend their lives with such

morose partners. We have, already, observed, that frail and imperfect as the very best of men are, by the constitution of their fallen nature, they have many things to be forgiven, not only by their Creator, but by their fellow-creatures, and, particularly, in that close and intimate connection of the married state. It is, therefore, the most unwise, as well as uncandid conduct, for men to act as if they were infallible, and all wisdom were lodged with them, exclusively ; and, under this false notion, to treat the partners of their fortunes with a degree of neglect or contempt which they, by no means, deserve. In those populous and extensive countries in the east, where the woman is considered as the mere instrument of animal gratification, and is looked on as the slave, and not as the equal, of man, connubial felicity and parental affection must, necessarily, be at a very low ebb. In England, however, where the general fashion is to treat women with the greatest possible respect, and where the dignity and worth of the female character is more justly appreciated than in any other country on earth,

society is carried to its greatest degree of improvement, and domestic love and union, together with the numberless tender duties of husband and wife, parents and children, brothers and sisters, which flow from it, are improved and extended in a proportionate degree. Would to heaven that this picture of connubial felicity could, with truth, be asserted to be universal; but alas! for the reasons which have been already set forth, we are, frequently, obliged to witness many instances of great misery in the married state, even in this country.

There is one very general error in the conduct of the married life, which is deserving of particular notice, as being the fruitful source of the decay of nuptial affection, and, in a proportionate degree, of the increase of unhappiness in that state. This is the indecorous custom of treating each other in too familiar a manner; which, insensibly, slides into a disregard for those decencies of behaviour, which should be ever retained in the married life. The proverb tells us that "familiarity breeds contempt:" it may be

added, disgust likewise between married persons, unless the utmost care be used to ward off the unwelcome intruder. There is a decorum of behaviour, which an husband and wife should ever preserve towards each other, if they would keep alive that affection, which is essential to constitute felicity in that state. The very intimate terms upon which married persons live, from the nature of their connection, are very apt to betray them in to a conduct offensive against this decorum; for which reason they should guard against the smallest tendency to it. Slovenliness of external appearance, particularly, in a woman, is also offensive and disgusting in a high degree, and if indulged till it becomes habitual, will, inevitably, lessen the affection of a husband, and, in no long space of time, entirely extinguish it. That it requires more art and good sense to keep alive the flame of love, than to excite it in the first instance, is a fact, which will prove itself in a thousand instances; and if no art be used to accomplish this point, it will in a short time languish and die. That the married world, in general, is too apt to disregard personal

cleanliness, and decorum of behaviour one towards another, is what we may ascertain by a very slight degree of observation; and from this we may date the decay of nuptial affection, and the increase of matrimonial infelicity.

Another great, yet common fault, which occurs in the married life, is the habit of contradicting, finding fault with, and using harsh and sometimes acrimonious expressions towards each other: an error, which cannot be guarded against with too much care. This pernicious habit is very apt to grow from small beginnings to an alarming height; and when arrived to this height, cannot be restrained, even by the presence of company. How often are we pained by witnessing acrimonious altercations, and cruel and severe reflections, which married persons cast upon each other; arising, sometimes, from the smallest difference in opinion on matters where it was of little consequence which of the parties was right; and sometimes, even, when both of them are wrong. By such unpleasant bickerings, the pleasure of society is destroyed; the minds of the contending parties are alienated from each other; and dislike and

antipathy usurp the place of that affection which should subsist between them. To avoid these unpleasant consequences, married persons should be less tenacious of their own opinions ; and willing rather to give up the point, than, by obstinately maintaining it, diminish the comfort of their friends, and detract from the happiness of each other.

The married state, when two persons of opposite habits, unsuitable years, and bad tempers, happen to come together, frequently turns out the most miserable condition that can be conceived : they seem, in such circumstances, born to perplex and tease one another, and often look forward to the time when death shall sever the knot by which they are united, as the happiest event that can befall them. The experience of every person who has accustomed himself to behold the actions of mankind, with an observant eye, must have convinced him of the truth of this remark in a great variety of instances. But let it be remembered for the honour of the married state, and of human nature in general, that this bond is capable of conferring the greatest happiness which mortals can taste

on this side of the grave. When persons of suitable years and amiable dispositions, of the same rank in life; and whose customs and habits have been nearly the same, enter into that alliance, with proper intentions and a sincere affection for each other, founded upon virtue and cemented by mutual esteem, it is then calculated to add to their happiness, by alleviating the unavoidable calamities, and doubling all the innocent enjoyments of life. It has fallen to the lot of the Author of these pages, in the course of a life not entirely unobservant of the customs and habits of mankind, to witness the greatest degree of unhappiness, and the highest state of felicity which the married state can confer; and from that view he has drawn the remarks which have occurred in the early part of this chapter.

We may here conclude our remarks on the conduct of the married life, which if attended to, in proportion to the magnitude of their object, will be likely to add materially to the comforts and happiness of that state; and proceed to the consideration of the more immediate causes which lead to the crime of adultery.

CHAP. XII.

Adultery.

ADULTERY, according to the law of England, is that violation of the marriage vow by the woman, when she proves unfaithful to her husband's bed, by having criminal conversation with another man. On this point, the law of Scotland, is said to differ materially from ours, inasmuch, as it "secures to the wife the equal privilege of redress in cases of infidelity, with that which the husband enjoys; which advantage, in this country, the man appears to enjoy singly." Now, whether this peculiarity of the Scottish law be desirable or not, is a question which will admit of large inquiry; and is a point upon which speculative men have not agreed: but, that the crime of adultery, in a married woman, is deserving of the severe cognizance of the law, will hardly admit of dispute. It must be acknowledged, that

the offence of the man against the marriage vow, is, in a moral point of view, just as great as that of the woman, and for that reason, is deserving of as great a punishment in a future state ; and there can be little doubt, that this punishment will be inflicted with the severity which it merits : but as the offence of the woman, who is ordained to produce issue, and to continue families, “ works corruption of blood ;” it is a greater offence against society than that of the man, therefore, the civil law punishes her crime more severely than his.

There is hardly any thing which varies more materially, than the customs of mankind, respecting the intercourse between the different sexes. In the despotic countries of the East, men are permitted to have as many wives as they please, or as their circumstances and rank will permit. But this allowed polygamy, as might be expected, creates the most cruel and despotic jealousy that can be imagined. These women are immured in prisons, called seraglios, where they are guarded by eunuchs, whose lives depend on their fidelity in discharging the trust reposed in

them. In these spacious and splendid prisons, deprived of the natural privilege of rational beings, liberty, they are not permitted to behold the face of a man, and if one should happen to be introduced amongst them, death would be the punishment both of him and of the woman who had ventured to prove unfaithful to her tyrannic lord. In Italy, on the contrary, if we may believe a modern traveller, the sexes associate together in the most free and unrestrained manner possible. According to this writer, adultery of the most public kind is practised, without censure from the complaisant husband, who thinks himself intitled to use the same freedom with other women, which he, so liberally, grants to his own wife. For a particular account of the amazing corruption of manners in Italy at the present day, the reader is referred to Dr. Brooke's "*Observations on the Customs and Manners of Italy*," &c. p. 66, 67, &c.

The libertinism of the French, though always great, yet, in the increased degree in which it is now practised, is a part of the new system of things, and a necessary

consequence of the new principles which have been lately introduced into that kingdom. These principles have been endeavoured, by every seducing art, to be transplanted into this island, and every diabolical illusion has been put in practice to force them, if possible, upon us. These persevering attempts have had, it must be owned, some partial effect, as may be perceived by the daily increasing number of causes for *crim. con.* which are brought into our courts of law: but yet they have not, thanks be to the providence of God, entirely beaten down every barrier of morals, and overthrown every palladium of female honour and virtue. On this point, that excellent writer, Mrs. Hannah More, speaks with such genuine good sense and truth, that the reader, it is imagined, will be glad to peruse the passage. "Let us take comfort, these atrocious principles are not yet adopted into general practice. Though corruptions seem, with a confluent tide, to be pouring in upon us from every quarter, yet there is still left amongst us a discriminating judgment; and clear and strongly marked distinctions between

right and wrong still subsist. While we contrive to cherish this sanity of the mind, the case is not desperate. Though that crime always exhibits the most irrefragable proof of the dissoluteness of public manners; though that crime, which eats up order and virtue by the roots is, awfully, increasing, yet—thanks be to the surviving efficacy of religion—to the operation of virtuous laws—and the energy and unshaken integrity with which these laws are now administered; and most of all, perhaps, to a standard of morals, which continues in force when the principles which sanctioned it are no more;—this crime, in the female sex, at least, is still held in just abhorrence: if it be committed it is not justified; we do not yet affect to palliate its turpitude; as yet it hides its abhorred head in lurking privacy; and reprobation, hitherto, follows its publicity.” Vol. I. p. 51.

Though, for the reasons assigned by this writer, our case may not be considered as desperate, yet, as the fascinating power of vice is known to all who have investigated human nature attentively, we cannot

be too much on our guard against it. There is a gradation in vice, which advances upon us, step by step, from the smallest beginnings, until it arrive, at last, at the very height of wickedness ; and the awfully increasing one which is the subject of our present inquiry, demands the utmost efforts of all good men to stem its torrent, and to prevent us from being overwhelmed like our Gallic and Italian neighbours.

To effect this very desirable end, it will be of essential use, to investigate the moving cause to the crime of adultery, so fatally prevalent in this age and community.

Harsh then as the opinion may at first sight appear, yet as truth must be regarded above every consideration; and, as the opinion will not affect the worthy part of the sex, but will only shew the unworthy individuals in their true light ; we are compelled to say, that from the most accurate observation of the manners and customs of the world, it will appear, that for one man who may properly be called a seducer, ten may, with justice, be said to be seduced. The truth of this observation will appear from the incon-

trovertible fact, that it must be from encouragement of some kind or another, that any man, let his audacity or principles be what they may, can summon sufficient effrontery to make a libertine-proposal to a married woman ; since those who entertain a proper sense of the dignity of the female character, will always consider it as the greatest insult that can be offered to them. This truth cannot, perhaps, be better expressed, than in the words of the late Dr. Moore.

“ A woman,” says he, “ by her manner, by her looks, and by a thousand similar manœuvres, can express her inclinations as well as by words : when these are directed, by a lady, to any particular man, before he speaks of love, she must be considered as the aggressor ; for, without such encouragement, a man of discernment would never venture to address her on the subject.” And in another part of the same work, the same idea is expressed in language very little differing from the above. As this opinion must approve itself to unprejudiced reason, it will receive confirmation from the following argument.

“ The moment a man mentions his love to a married woman, she cannot but see his drift. After which, if she permit him to continue or renew the subject, what construction can be made, but that it is agreeable to her. The same observation holds good when a married man talks of love to an unmarried woman: if she be not a child or an idiot, she must know that he cannot mean honourable love; she must know what he really does mean: and she, who allows herself to be led, though by a circuitous path, to the point she has in her eye, cannot be said to be seduced; unless it is thought that a woman may be seduced without being deceived.” — (Moore's Mordaunt, Vol. I. p. 108.)

The light and dissipated manners of our modern females, coupled with the very indecent style of dress which has been the fashion for several years past, gives the first signal, to the unprincipled libertine, of the inward disposition of their minds. Finding his addresses not discouraged, he proceeds, like an experienced engineer, to sap the foundation of virtue, until, at

length, he accomplishes the object which he has in view. This is the almost uniform progress of the numberless crim. con. affairs which so abound amongst us. Sometimes, perhaps, a very bold dame, who is coupled to a very mild or a very weak helpmate, may be better subdued by storm, but the far greater number require more regular and gradual approaches, and, at the least, demand of their paramour to furnish them with some colourable pretext for the wickedness which they have predetermined to commit. On such occasions, the devil is seldom deficient in suggesting arguments sufficient, for the moment, to lull asleep the conscience of the sinning parties, and, in the dear delights of stolen love, makes them either forgetful or regardless of the future consequences of their illicit commerce. But this arch deceiver will be sure to betray them at the last. For, having, by small degrees, drawn them on to the utmost height of wickedness, he, in the end, takes care that, by some petty and insignificant instrument, they shall be detected and exposed to the punishment and contempt

of man; and, he only waits for the hour of death, to drag their miserable souls to eternal torments. Read this, ye married dames, who, for a moment, allow a dishonourable and licentious thought to enter your hearts: read it—reflect on it—and tremble!!

Female libertinism, especially of married women, is, beyond controversy, the crying sin of these eventful times: but in the degree of its atrocity, and in the ill consequences which it produces to others, the incontinency of single and married women, bears no sort of comparison. It is in unison with the design of this work, to take a cursory view of them both.

With regard to the unhappy deviation of a single woman from the path of virtue, how often does it happen that, confiding in the honour and rectitude of him who hath obtained possession of her virgin heart, in an unguarded moment she has been betrayed to disgrace and ruin. On such an occasion, a thousand alleviating circumstances might be suggested by the candid and generous mind, which would greatly detract from the criminality of the

act; and would lessen that degree of odium which the malignant world is too apt to throw, indiscriminately, upon the erring female. How frequently does Satan assume the appearance of an angel of light, the more effectually to carry on the purposes of his dark designs; and, how often do wicked men, those powerful instruments of his designs, assume the same disguise for the like purposes. May not unsuspecting innocence and virtuous love be, perhaps, betrayed, in an unguarded moment, by men of this description; the strong feelings of human nature, and the arts of a deceitful betrayer co-operating together to effect the atrocious deed? That this is likely to happen, in some instances, no one can possibly deny, that it really has come to pass, in many cases, we have the most certain and undoubted evidence. With palliating circumstances of this description, good nature would willingly draw the veil of forgiveness over the once erring votary of virtue; and Charity, that queen of virtues, in the true spirit of Christianity, would "not be extreme to mark what is done amiss." But, alas! how very

widely from this amiable conduct does the indiscriminating world generally judge of this very delicate aberration ! It is worth our while to hear what that amiable and feeling poet, Goldsmith, says on such an occasion as this : —

“ When lovely woman stoops to folly,
“ And finds, too late, that men betray,
“ What charm can cure her melancholy,
“ What art can wash her guilt away ?

“ The only art her guilt to cover,
“ And hide her shame from every eye,
“ To give repentance to her lover,
“ And wring his bosom—is to die !”

Far, very far is it from the Author's design to attempt, for an instant, to be the advocate for vice : he is only pleading the cause of injured innocence, and endeavouring to shew how far less atrocious is the single error, from the path of virtue, in an unmarried female, than it is in one who has entered into the sacred engagement of matrimony. The crime of incontinency is less in the unmarried than in the married female, if we consider it with respect to the injury which it brings upon others. If they both stand nearly on the

same grounds, with regard to the injury done to the honour of a family, and the feelings of parents and other near relations in life, yet the former does not, like the latter, involve an husband and children in disgrace and misery by her misconduct.

Let us reflect on the case of a married woman who ventures to swerve from the path of virtue.

The married female libertine, unlike the other case, always sins with her eyes open; and in no case, whatsoever, can she possibly plead that she has been betrayed or deceived. The woman who has once plighted her troth to her husband at the altar, can never forget the delicate situation in which she stands, and the solemn nature of the oath which she there, voluntarily, took to be faithful to that husband during the continuance of their joint lives. The vicious propensities of her heart may induce her to overlook this solemn engagement, but to forget it is, absolutely, impossible. Whenever a libertinous thought arises in the heart of a married woman, the conviction must, instantaneously, recur to her, that, if carried into execution, she

will, by such an act, violate the stipulations of the marriage covenant—ruin, for ever; her own happiness and peace of mind—and plant daggers in the heart of him who had selected her from all the world to be the partner, and sharer of his fortunes.

Reflections of this nature cleave so firmly to the minds of all females, that it is as impossible to forget them, as it is to forget their own existence: and, as the full completion of the act of adultery requires a combination of time, opportunity, contrivance, and much cool and serious thought, profligate and abandoned in the highest degree must that woman be, who determines to commit it. In vain it is pleaded, in extenuation, that a husband's ill-temper or cruelty has driven the suffering wife to commit it. In vain it is asserted that, by the law of retaliation, the wife that is deserted by her husband for the arms of another, has a right to solace herself, for that desertion, with another man. From the effects of ill-usage and ill-temper, when become intolerable, a woman is sheltered by fair application to the laws of her country, which, in such cases,

will grant separate maintenance, and separation also from bed and board : but with respect to retaliating the injury of a profligate husband, by copying his example, the laws of honour and conscience, the delicacy and innate modesty which is a constituent part of the female character, absolutely, forbid it.

Wide, very wide, therefore, is the distinction betwixt the fall of the unmarried and the married female ; since many grains of allowance may be made for the former, but seldom or never can the slightest excuse be urged in favor of the latter. Forasmuch then, as an excess of virtuous affection, misplaced on an undeserving object, may sometimes betray the former, and the disgrace affects herself only, without bringing misery on an husband and children, we see her crime in a far less atrocious point of view : but since the latter must, always, sin wilfully, coolly, deliberately, in defiance of solemn vows of constancy and of truth, and involves the happiness of a husband and children in disgrace and ruin, and, besides all this, by the force of a bad example, does incalculable mis-

chief to society at large ; therefore we conclude, that the guilt and infamy of a married female libertine is incomparably greater than that of one who is unmarried.

We shall next proceed to consider the remedies which have, at different times, been applied for the cure of adultery ; and the best mode to prevent its future progress.

CHAP. XIII.

Punishments of this Crime, and the most probable means of diminishing it.

IN the philosophic history of man, nothing can be more surprising than the very different estimation in which the female character has been held by different nations, and the various customs which have obtained respecting them. But, there is no particular, which has been subject to greater variety, than the opinion in which female chastity has been held, by different people, throughout the vast extent of the terraqueous globe which we inhabit. It may, without exaggeration, be affirmed, that the local situation of the antipodes, is not more opposite on the earth than are the varieties of opinion on this subject.

If we may credit the report which circumnavigators give us of the customs of some islands, the women were offered to the embraces of the sailors who visited

them, and, to decline this very extraordinary offer, was considered as the greatest insult which could be put upon them. In the polished countries of modern Europe, particularly, in the soft and luxurious regions of Italy, female chastity appears also to be held in no very high estimation. The married women, it is said, are usually attended by male Cicesbio's, who have access to them as freely as their husbands, and who, invariably, attend them in every public place; whilst the husband, on such occasions, is treated with a degree of distant civility, in other countries, shewn, usually, to a mere common acquaintance. On the contrary, it is well known, that the jealous Turks, whose laws allow them to indulge in a plurality of wives, immure them in seraglios, where they are constantly guarded by watchful eunuchs, and are never permitted to behold the face of any man, but the jealous tyrant who monopolizes the most charming and accomplished females in these dreary abodes of wretchedness and irremediable woe; and if any of the unhappy beings are detected in infidelity to their lords, the life of the

frail female, and that of her paramour, would be instantly sacrificed to his resentment. The jealous cares also of the Chinese, with respect to their women, are too well known to make it necessary to enumerate them in this place.

To us, who live in countries removed at an equal distance from the two extremes, these accounts can afford only matter of curious speculation, but can neither influence our opinions nor bias our conduct. We may wonder, at that stupid insensibility to the want of chastity of the females in one part of the world, which appears to pervade the different ranks of the male sex, and we may reprobate, as loudly as we please, the jealous tyranny which they exercise over the weaker sex in other regions of the earth: but, we can only form our sentiments on this momentous point, from the customs and manners which prevail in our own country.

It is a fact, which redounds not less to the glory of the male, than it is happy for the other sex, that, in no part of the known world, is the dignity and worth of the female character, more justly appre-

ciated than in this island ; and in no part of the habitable world, is the weaker sex treated with so much delicacy and tender affection, as they experience in these regions. In pursuance of the dictates of nature and uncorrupted reason, chastity is esteemed, universally, the brightest gem which can adorn the female character. Possessed of this jewel, the poorest female, in the realm, is regarded with a high degree of reverence and respect by every individual in whose bosom virtue and goodness hold a place : without it, the most exalted or titled female is in reality an object of contempt. Such are the sentiments which generally prevail through the populous and extensive empire of Great Britain.

Until about the middle of the last century, adultery was a crime of very rare occurrence : and when it did come before the tribunal of public justice, it was regarded with a mixture of sorrow, of surprise, and of indignation. About the same period, the licentious and immoral philosophy, which we have noted in a former part of this work, began to obtain a footing in

this island, and the unfortunate consequence was, that the female sex were gradually drawn aside from that exemplary purity of character, which hitherto had distinguished them from the whole world. The several other causes which have been enumerated in the progress of this work, operating in conjunction with this bewitching philosophy, introduced a corresponding corruption of morals; and, for some years past, the crime of unfaithfulness to the marriage bed, has arrived to a very alarming height.

To stem the torrent of this overwhelming corruption, various methods have been tried. Penal laws have been enacted: and the ingenuity of legislators has been exercised, in inventing modes of lessening this crime, by the quantum and variety of punishment, which awaited the perpetrators of it. It is a matter of very considerable importance, in such an investigation as this, to determine, as nearly as possible, how far this method has been or is likely to be effectual in compassing the object which it was intended to effect.

There are several countries mentioned

in history, and some, as we have just observed, where death is the punishment annexed to this crime ; and our own laws, so far favour the acute feelings of an injured husband that, if he should happen to detect the adulterer, in the very commission of his crime, and in the moment of irritation should deprive him of life, the law does not consider this as murder, but gives it the softer appellation of manslaughter, and the life of the injured party is not forfeited.

In former periods of our own history, the punishments for this heinous crime have been very severe : but in those times, when almost every offence was commuted for money, pecuniary mulcts were imposed on the adulterer, as a compensation to the injured party. This is the exact state of the affair at the present day. That this mode of punishing the adulterer is neither satisfactory to the injured husband, nor yet available to the prevention of this crime, the yearly increasing number of divorces proves in the most undeniable manner : but, that some mode of personal punishment of the offending parties might,

if judiciously applied, have a more decisive effect, is, certainly, a very probable conjecture. The particular species of punishment which might be most likely to effect this desirable end, is a point which very well deserves our most serious inquiry.

In the year 1800, a bill was brought into Parliament to prevent and punish the crime of adultery ; it contained some salutary provisions, likely enough to have put a check at least, on this increasing evil. It contained, however, a clause to prevent the adulterer and adulteress from intermarrying with each other on the divorce of the adulteress by the legislature of the realm. This bill caused very great division of sentiment in the House, and was, finally, lost in the House of Lords. Since that period, the legislature has not interfered, but quietly permitted the present very imperfect laws, respecting adultery, to remain the same as before the bill was introduced.

In the year 1801, a little pamphlet was published, intitled, "NUPTIÆ SACRÆ,"

&c. and the author having investigated the subject of marriage and divorce, recommended, as a means of putting a check on the crime of adultery, the revival of the ancient penalties against the seducer; some of which were confessedly very severe.

There was, however, a very well written and sensible little tract, published a year or two before this, intitled, "Thoughts on Marriage and Criminal Conversation," &c. wherein the author specifically points out a punishment for the seducer of a married woman, which, perhaps, might have some influence in preventing the, now, so frequent recurrence of this crime. This author, justly, considering pecuniary fines as totally inadequate to the end for which they were imposed: and judging that, in many instances, this crime springs from vanity, added to the impure thoughts which beauty inspires, recommends such a punishment as may effectually cut off every pretence of vanity from the adulterer, viz. "a confinement for a limited time in Newgate, or any other jail in the king-

dom, with, or without, pecuniary mulct." In some cases, he even advises "the pillory, as a proper addition to this sentence.

With respect to the punishment which it would be proper to inflict on the adulteress, the author of "*Nuptiæ Sacræ*" advises such an one as, "while it kept at a distance the enemies of her virtue, might impress a salutary lesson on her own mind, viz. the loss of fortune, and an official inspection of her moral conduct."

These suggestions are, undoubtedly, deserving of the highest consideration, and, as hints for some mode of stemming the progress of this increasing evil, are worthy of being investigated by the members of the British legislature. It may be thought, by some persons, and perhaps the idea is not altogether without foundation, that, when a loose rein is given to the bad passions of the human mind, and no considerations of morality or religion are found sufficient to check them, the imposition of severe pains and penalties are, indispensibly, necessary, to prevent them from over-

turning the very peace and common security of society.

We are ready to allow the cogency of this argument, and to grant as much force to it as it can justly claim. Severe penalties must, doubtless, operate, to prevent any crime from obtaining an overwhelming influence; and for this reason we should be extremely glad to see the legislature, immediately, adopt some sort of punishment in this case, not very remote from those which we have quoted, with approbation, above. Nay, we will even advance a step farther, and confess our conviction, that, unless some such controul be speedily resorted to, the present depraved state of public morals will quickly increase to a very alarming height; and the consequences will be of so dreadful a nature, as no sagacity can, fully, foresee.

It is allowed, then, that punishments of the nature of those suggested, or, indeed, of any other that can be thought of by the wit of man, may be useful to put a partial check on this crime; but we cannot think

that they alone will be efficacious in diminishing it in any very considerable degree ; much less do we imagine they can operate to destroy it entirely. The accomplishment of this very desirable object must be by slow and gradual steps ; and time alone, with an attention to the plan hereafter suggested, it is imagined, will be able to effect it.

In the foregoing pages, the most prominent of the several concurring causes which tend to foster and increase the prevailing corruption, have been largely entered into. It is not without the greatest reason that the matter has been discussed so much in detail ; since, unless the evil be probed to the very bottom, all partial investigation of it would be nugatory ; and the time of the Author and of his readers would be entirely thrown away. We may, therefore, venture to hazard an opinion, that it is only by avoiding those errors which are so fully laid open in the course of this work, that we can hope to escape the danger which flows from so many sources upon us, and regain that purity of

character which formerly distinguished our ancestors in this island.

In the following chapter will be brought under review the heads of what has been previously advanced, and a few useful reflections deduced from the whole.

CHAP. XIV.

Recapitulation ; and conclusion.

WHEN any subject of literary investigation has been treated in a methodical and regular manner, it generally proves useful, for the purpose of more deeply impressing it on the reader's mind, to bring, into one single point of view, the various topics which have been discussed at large. It is for the purpose of effecting this desirable end that we now retrace the heads of what has been advanced : and it is to be hoped, that the effect will be such as may naturally be expected from it.

In an inquiry of the nature of that which has here occupied the reader's attention, the theory of the passions, and the effects they are capable of producing in the world, ought to be competently understood. For this reason, in the introductory chapter, was noticed, the power which they possess of adding to the happiness of mankind,

when kept within the controul of reason and religion ; and how they are calculated to render mankind miserable when set at liberty from these just restraints. In particular, we have remarked how this observation applies to that universal passion which attracts, in so powerful a manner, the different sexes towards each other. In this chapter, we have slightly glanced at the departed ages of chivalry, when love and honour were considered as the same : and we have observed the sad reverse of the scene which the customs of modern times hold forth to our view. Whilst lamenting the dreadful corruption of the times in which we live, we have noticed the wonderful effects of the example of the higher classes of the community, and have remarked the extremely bad conduct of some of those who occupy that station in this country. In the last place we have called upon every individual, who has the good of society and the happiness of his fellow-creatures at heart, to exert himself strenuously both by precept and example, to stop the torrent of the prevailing corrupt manners in these kingdoms.

Considering how necessary it is, to be well acquainted with the general cause of that deterioration of our nature, which so powerfully propels us to vice, the second chapter, has been given to our general account of the means by which we have entered into the state of degeneracy, progress which it has made from that time to the present moment, and the difficulty, if not impossibility, of recovering for the adulterous soul, that purity, by the mere determination to forsake it. We have determined that we will never, or ever possibly, return to the state of innocence, until we have clearly discovered it to manifest itself, having shewn the unhappy soul, that sin has gained over the mind, and we have demonstrated, by several powerful arguments, that we are not so much as tempted to commit sin; and consequently, all the excuses which are urged in extenuation of it, cannot produce the end at which we aim, that they will not be availing of eternal justice. On this ground, we have proposed

the goodness and impartiality, as well as the justice of the Creator, in the dispensation of rewards and punishments, annexed to the condition of trial in which we are placed upon earth ; by shewing that he has provided us with arms, sufficiently powerful, to withstand the assaults of our spiritual adversary, if we will but make a proper use of them : and we have endeavoured to explain the nature of those means of safety, which have been dispensed to us.

After delineating the means by which the general corruption of our nature was effected, in the third chapter, we have proceeded to investigate the particular causes which are most likely to make us a prey to the power of temptation. We have commented, with just severity, on the pernicious and unnatural custom of parents sending their children to wet nurses in the country, by which means a train of bad consequences are entailed on the unhappy children thus abandoned by their natural parents ; and which no after care in the future periods of their lives, can either atone for or compensate. From this

consideration mothers are conjured, whenever circumstances will permit them so to do, on no account whatever to deprive their offspring of that natural and genial current which, in healthy parents, is produced in great abundance ; and which reason assures us must be better adapted to the constitution of the infant than any substitute which can be provided. After duly impressing this opinion on the reader's mind, we have proceeded to notice the amazing power of example on the minds of children during the early periods of their lives ; whence we have deduced the necessity of a good example being placed before them, both by the parents and domestics of the family. Other dangers likewise, to which the tender years of children are peculiarly exposed, are commented on, and explained in the concluding part of this chapter.

In the fourth chapter has been considered the ill effects which too commonly proceed from the modern system of female education ; and the many evil consequences which flow from the bad customs adopted in the numerous boarding - schools for

young ladies which swarm all over the kingdom. In discussing this subject we have inquired, whether mothers be or be not best qualified to instruct their female offspring; and we have not only investigated the subject of public and private education, but have ventured to suggest, under what peculiar circumstances the one should be preferred to the other.

The education of the young lady being completed, she begins to act her part on the grand theatre of human life, in a higher or lower station, according as she may have been placed by the wisdom and providence of the Supreme Being. In the fifth chapter, therefore, we take a view of the more extended causes of corruption which now begin to present themselves, and which, too frequently, overpower, with their bewitching wiles, the young female who ventures to listen to them.

The numerous sources of corruption which flow from the pernicious customs and fashions of the times wherein we live, are pointed out, and the reader is forewarned to avoid them. The first danger to which females are exposed, arises from

the custom of introducing them so early into life, before judgment or reason can be at all matured, and can enable them to discern the manifold dangers by which they are surrounded. The opinions of some celebrated writers are quoted to strengthen this argument. The seductive power of that vortex of dissipation and pleasure into which the young female is thus early drawn is remarked, with the effects which it, in general, very soon produces on the minds and bodies of those who are within the influence of it. The bad effect which the indecent mode of female attire must have on the minds of the wearer, is noticed in this place: and the fashionable custom of painting, now almost universally adopted in the great world, is also pointed out with due severity. The general ill-effects of the intemperate passion for theatrical exhibition, in the present depraved state of the stage, is not forgotten; and the debilitating effects of novels and highly wrought romances are noticed in this part of the chapter. In the last place, the pernicious influence of that senseless and unmeaning gallantry of modern young

men, and the flattery and delusion with which they address the females on all occasions, are brought into review.

In the sixth chapter we have a view of the *modern infidel philosophy*, which, as it is the scandal and disgrace of the age in which we live, so is it likely, unless proper antidotes are applied to it, to cause the overthrow of these kingdoms, as it formerly did of the ancient and flourishing kingdoms of Greece and Rome. We have here observed, that the originality which the propagators of this philosophy aim at in their tenets, does not, in reality, belong to them, since they have derived it from others, who did but themselves borrow it from preceding infidels. In this part we have slightly noticed the leading principles of Epicurus and Lucretius; and thence have proceeded to the seductive tenets of modern infidels, who have drawn their opinions from that school. From the host of modern infidels we have noticed some of the most impious dogmas of Lord Herbert of Cherbury, Mr. Hume, and Lord Bolingbroke; and the picture which we have given of them, is sufficient to dis-

gust any mind wherein virtue or morality have an habitation. The mode of propagating these opinions by the press, has been duly noticed, and the various vehicles of novels, histories, and dramatic compositions, resorted to for the purpose of effecting this grand scheme. In all these different lines of writing, we have pointed out a few of the most pernicious, as specimens of what engines have been employed to corrupt the minds of the unwary ; and mentioned one novel which has been written expressly to expose the dangerous principles of this deceitful philosophy. The true reason for the revival of these seductive opinions, has been attempted to be given—their dangerous effects have been shewn—and good men have been called on to resist them with all their power.

Considering the extreme danger which may arise from the two popular dramas of *Pizarro* and *The Stranger*, the seventh chapter has been expressly dedicated to the exposure of them in their true colours. We have here noticed some of the occurrences which caused the first of these dramas to become popular, from a few of

the sentiments contained in them happening to suit the features of the times; and thence have proceeded to analyze the plan and general design of these two plays. The tendency of the character of Elvira in Pizarro, and of Eurlia in The Stranger, has been placed in a proper point of view, and the public has been guarded against the danger which accompanies the frequent contemplation of such seducing representations of unchastity in unmarried and married females.

From investigating the tendency of these two popular dramas, we have proceeded, in the eighth chapter, to inquire into the life and writings of the celebrated Mrs. Wolstoncroft Godwin, the eccentric authoress of "The Wrongs of Woman" and several literary productions; and an opinion has been formed, on the report of her life and actions, by her husband, Mr. Godwin, whose evident partiality to her memory, places his narrative above the imputation of desiring to cast a dark shade on her character, however the facts which he relates may have the effect of such an impression on the reader's mind. It will

here be found, that, greatly as Mrs. Godwin decried the institution of marriage, she was indebted to it for all the happiness which she tasted on this side the grave: and that the principle of unrestrained commerce between the sexes, which she conceived to be the most eligible plan of human society, brought upon her, in her connection with Mr. Imlay, such a load of wretchedness, as made her twice attempt to destroy herself. A lesson, this, which speaks more than volumes could say!!

In the ninth chapter are seen the various kinds of deception which the different sexes impose upon each other in the affair of courtship; and how little of the real character and disposition, as this is now managed, can be found out during that season.

The important point of marriage occupies the tenth chapter; and the subject is considered, in all its bearings, with that minuteness to which it is justly entitled. The improper motives which, too frequently, unite together persons whose manners and dispositions are perfectly discordant,

men, and the flattery and delusion with which they address the females on all occasions, are brought into review.

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has been pointed out in the early part of the work.

To this prime cause of the corruption which prevails in the world, must be added, the various incentives to evil, derived from boarding-schools, as they are now conducted; and, to escape some of these dangers, a method has been suggested, in the chapter which treats on this subject.

The thousand dangers which arise from the bad customs and manners of the present times—the deceits which are mutually practised in the affair of courtship—the conduct of married parties, one towards each other—and the too frequent ill consequences of all these causes operating together, have been distinctly inquired into, and deserve the most serious reflection of every individual, and particularly of those who, as parents or teachers, have a more than usual influence on the manners of the rising generation.

After having inquired into the subject of adultery, and the several punishments which have been adopted to check its progress, it has been concluded, that this alone can scarcely be hoped to diminish it

in any considerable degree. The reason of this is not very difficult to be assigned ; for while so many predisposing causes, as have been enumerated, exist, in all their vigour, punishments, of any kind, must prove inadequate to counteract them. Effectually, to obtain this much desired object, these causes must be removed, and the evil will then cease ; all other plans must fail of procuring the reformation which we so much want.

The example set by the higher class of the community, is of the very first importance in ameliorating public morals, in discountenancing Vice, and in exalting Virtue to her just dignity. Let, then, this class of society contribute their quota to the much desired reformation ; and the influence of their conduct will, instantly, extend itself downwards, and produce the most happy effects. Instead of receiving into society the married female, who has violated her connubial vows, and brought misery upon a husband, and disgrace upon her children ; let her be excluded, for ever, from the rank where, heretofore, she was treated with that respect due only to vir-

tuous and worthy females ; and let her, in *privity* and *penitence*, endeavour to make her peace with God and with her own conscience.

When this wise and necessary plan is once adopted, we may hope to see married persons receive the just reward of true and faithful love, in that happiness which will spring from the interchange of affectionate offices between them ; and in that honour and respect which their exemplary conduct deserves. The proper punishment, also, of connubial infidelity, will follow the parties who venture to infringe the sanctity of their vows, in that *contempt* and *misery* which is so justly their due. Thus retribution will pursue good or bad conduct even in this life ; and in the life to come, every thing will be in favour of virtue, and every thing, as it ought to be, adverse to vice.

Finally, then, may Virtue receive her proper reward, and may Vice be degraded to her just level—may all those who are the favourers and supporters of connubial fidelity have success in their honourable endeavours, whilst those who broach and

spread the opposite principles are covered with just contempt—may married love be productive of all that unmixed felicity which attended it in Paradise before the fall of the first parents of the human race—and may that foretaste of happiness, which this is capable of giving us upon earth, be consummated and completed in the regions of eternal joy and love!

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